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VS.
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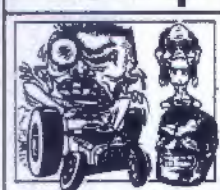

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KONGA VOLUME 1, NUMBER 21 FEBRUARY, 1965

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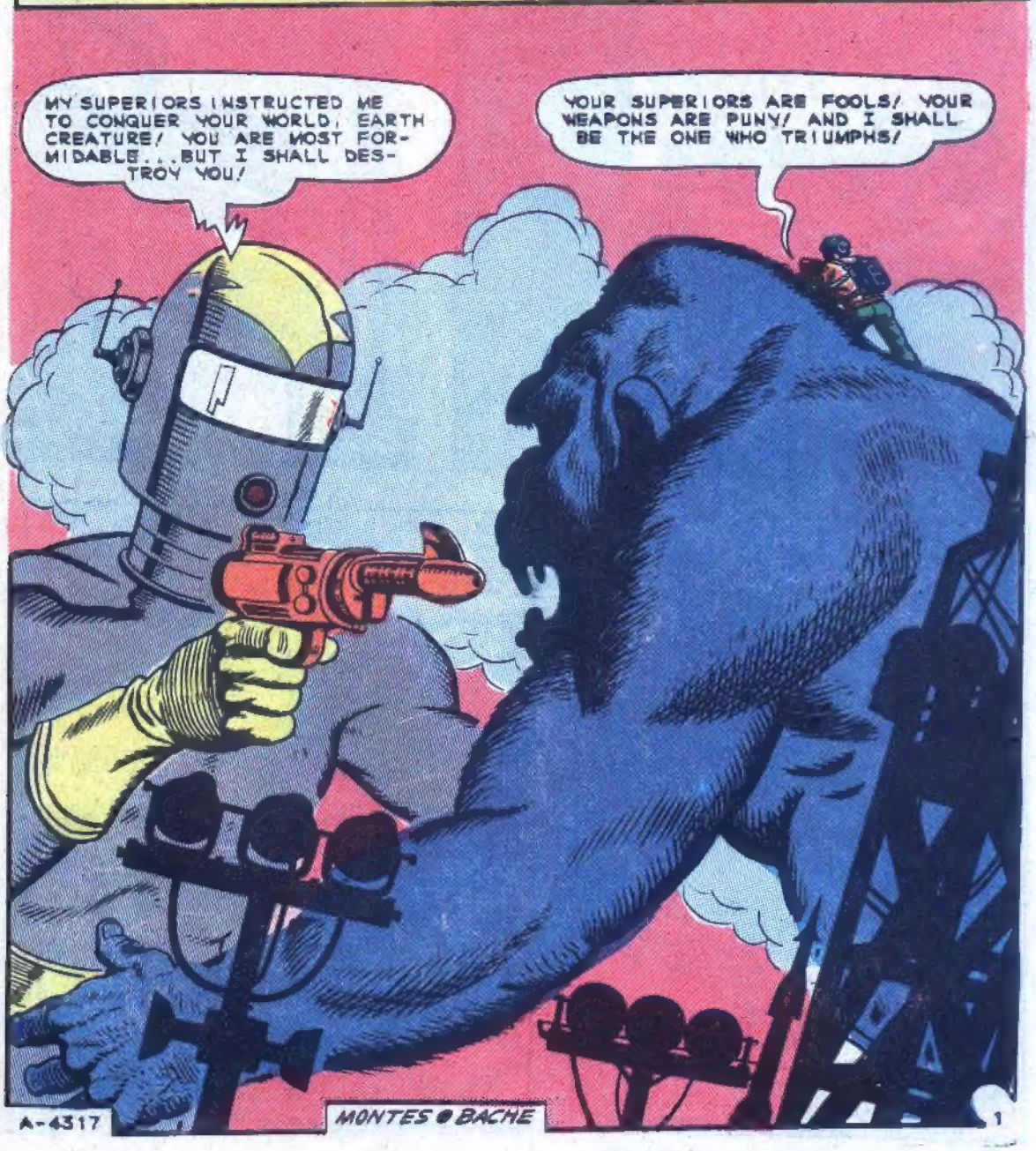
THE CHALLENGER

ON THEIR PLANET YAGOS, THE RULING CREATURES WERE TREMENDOUS IN SIZE... THEIR BRAINS WERE REMARKABLY DEVELOPED...AND THEIR TECHNOLOGY WAS FAR IN ADVANCE OF OURS/ SO...THEY EXAMINED OUR LITTLE PLANET FROM THEIR SPACE SHIPS/ THEY COMPILED A LIBRARY OF DATA ABOUT MAN, HIS PLANET, AND HIS WEAKNESSES...AND THEN, WHEN THE YAGOLIANS WERE CERTAIN OF VICTORY, THEY SENT THEIR CHAMPION TO EARTH/ HIS MISSION WAS TO DEMONSTRATE THE VAST SUPERIORITY AND INVULNERABILITY OF HIS RACE COMPARED WITH MANKIND/ WHAT HE MET WAS NOT A MAN AT ALL...BUT KONGA/ AND THIS WAS A NEW KONGA...WHO SPOKE WITH CLEAR, UNANSWERABLE LOGIC...


MY SUPERIORS INSTRUCTED ME TO CONQUER YOUR WORLD, EARTH CREATURE/ YOU ARE MOST FORMIDABLE...BUT I SHALL DESTROY YOU!
YOUR SUPERIORS ARE FOOLS/ YOUR WEAPONS ARE PUNY/ AND I SHALL BE THE ONE WHO TRIUMPHS/
MONTES • BACHE

KONGA

WHEN EARTH FORMED FROM GASES FLUNG OFF BY THE SUN...CONDENSED AND COOLED AND BECAME MATTER...WHILE THIS WAS HAPPENING MANY EONS AGO...YAGOS WAS ALREADY FORMED AND PERFECT/ THE CREATURES OF THAT FAR-OFF PLANET HAD ALREADY CONQUERED MOST OF THEIR NEIGHBORS/

WARRIORS OF YAGO, GO FORTH AND CONQUER/ WE NEED RAW MATERIALS, WE NEED LESSER SPECIES TO WORK IN MINES AND FACTORIES/ BRING BACK THE WEALTH OF THE UNIVERSE TO ENRICH OUR WORLD/

THE YAGOLIANS PREYED ON THEIR FAR CORNER OF THE UNIVERSE/ THE UNSIGHTLY CREATURES FOUND PLANETS AS HIGHLY DEVELOPED AS THEIR OWN...

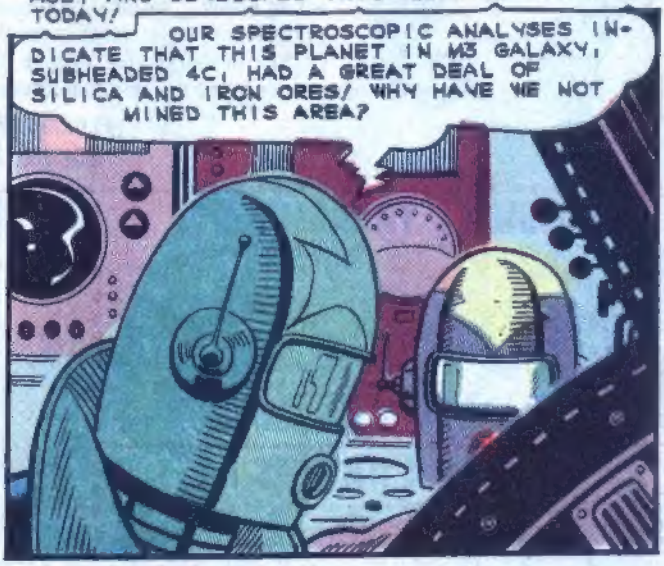
...AND DESTROYED THEM/

ONCE, WHEN OUR PLANET WAS VERY, VERY YOUNG, A YAGOLIAN SHIP VISITED BRIEFLY...

...DURING THE AGE OF ICE/ THE ICE CAP COVERED WHAT IS NOW NORTH AMERICA AND EUROPE AND THE OCEANS WERE VAST DESERTS OF ICE/

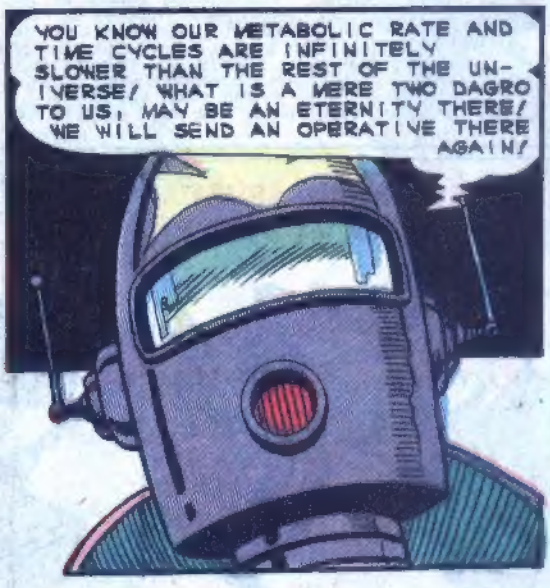
THEY DID NOT LINGER ON OUR INHOSPITABLE PLANET/ AND THIS VISIT ACCOUNTED FOR EARTH'S LONG FREEDOM FROM YAGOLIAN INVASION...WHILE MAN WAS BORN, CAME OF AGE, AND DEVELOPED INTO WHAT WE ARE TODAY/

OUR SPECTROSCOPIC ANALYSES INDICATE THAT THIS PLANET IN M3 GALAXY, SUBHEADED 4C, HAD A GREAT DEAL OF SILICA AND IRON ORES/ WHY HAVE WE NOT MINED THIS AREA?



TWO DAGRA AGO, WARRIORS INVESTIGATED THAT LITTLE PLACE/ HE REPORTED INHOSPITABLE CLIMATE, LACK OF VEGETATION, AND NO LIFE/

YOU KNOW OUR METABOLIC RATE AND TIME CYCLES ARE INFINITELY SLOWER THAN THE REST OF THE UNIVERSE/ WHAT IS A MERE TWO DAGRO TO US, MAY BE AN ETERNITY THERE/ WE WILL SEND AN OPERATIVE THERE AGAIN/



LUKK IS READY/ WE WILL FEED HIM THE DATA FROM THE COMPUTER PROCESSER, RE-ENERGIZE HIM, AND POINT HIM TOWARD THIS PLANET...EARTH IS THE NAME WE WILL USE TO DESIGNATE IT/

CONTINUED AFTER FOLLOWING PAGE

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AT THAT MOMENT, BLISSFULLY UNAWARE OF ANY SUCH PLACE AS YAGOS AND THE WARRIOR LUKK, ON EARTH, KONGA WAS SWIMMING IN THE STEAMING JUNGLES OF HIS NATIVE LAND!
RRR

AAAHH! NOW IS MY OPPORTUNITY!
ZZ
Z

HOLD ON, DOC! IF YOU TRY TO PLUG THAT CRITTER, I'M TAKIN' OUTA HERE! 'SIDES...

...HOW WE GONNA HAUL THE CARCASS HOME IF YOU DO MANAGE TO KILL IT!
KILL? KILL KONGA? I ASSURE YOU, MY FRIEND, THIS IS THE FARTHEST THING FROM MY MIND!

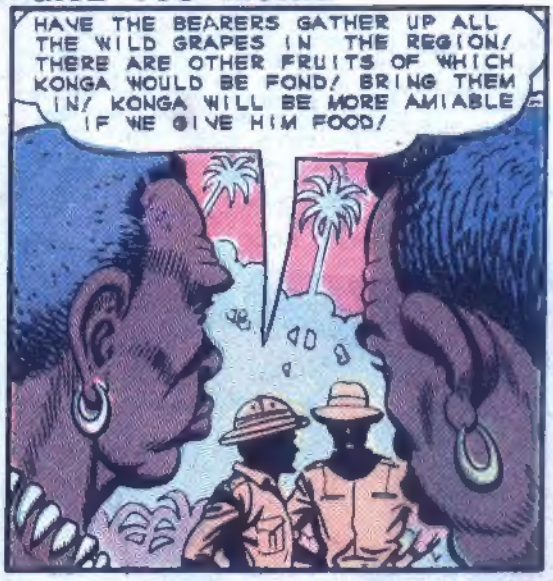
WHAT I PLAN TO DO, MY FRIEND, IS MAKE FRIENDS WITH THAT GREAT CREATURE!

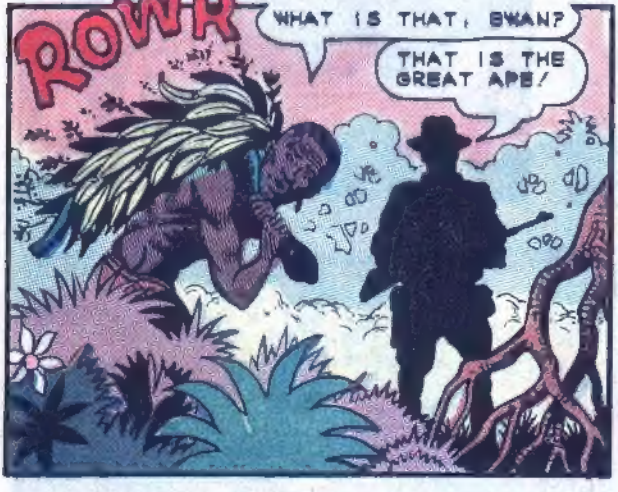
THERE WAS NO CHANGE FOR A TIME/ THE GREAT PRIMATE SLEPT ON...BUT WHEN TEN MINUTES HAD PASSED, BONES BONOMO, THE WHITE HUNTER, NOTICED THAT KONGA WAS SLEEPING STILL MORE DEEPLY/ HE SEEMED TO BE ALMOST IN A COMA...

I AM SURE THAT COMMUNICATION IS POSSIBLE WITH KONGA/ THE YOUNG COUPLE WHO WORKED WITH HIM IN THE PAST INSIST HE HAS A VERY HIGH INTELLIGENCE LEVEL...
ZZZ

KONGA, I AM YOUR FRIEND/ YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS HEARS ME NOW...YOU RECOGNIZE MY VOICE, YOU KNOW THAT I WISH YOU WELL/ I WANT TO BE YOUR FRIEND/

FOR HOURS, THE SCIENTIST SPOKE TO KONGA/ AT LAST, WHEN THE GIANT SEEMED TO BE GETTING RESTLESS AND AWAKENING, HE CLAMBERED DOWN/
PUT THE GUN UP, BARKER/ YOUR BULLET COULD NOT HARM KONGA/
WHEN HE WAKES UP, DOC, HE MIGHT BE HARD TO HANDLE/


HAVE THE BEARERS GATHER UP ALL THE WILD GRAPES IN THE REGION/ THERE ARE OTHER FRUITS OF WHICH KONGA WOULD BE FOND/ BRING THEM IN/ KONGA WILL BE MORE AMIABLE IF WE GIVE HIM FOOD/


ROWR
WHAT IS THAT, BWANA?
THAT IS THE GREAT APE/

BE STILL, YOU UNMANNERLY CREATURE?

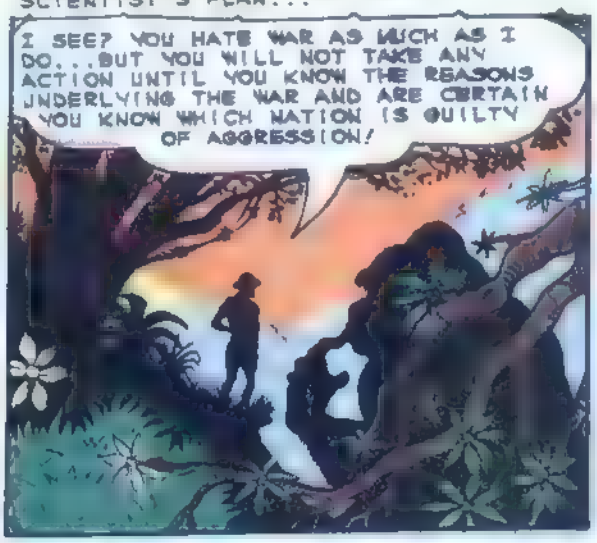
KONGA HEARD/ AND HE WAS UNACCUSTOMED TO BEING ADMONISHED IN THAT AFFECTIONATE TONE/ HE BENT LOWER TO EXAMINE THIS NEW CREATURE...
?
GO ON, NOSEY, STARE ALL YOU LIKE/ I SAY, KONGA...ARE YOU HUNGRY?

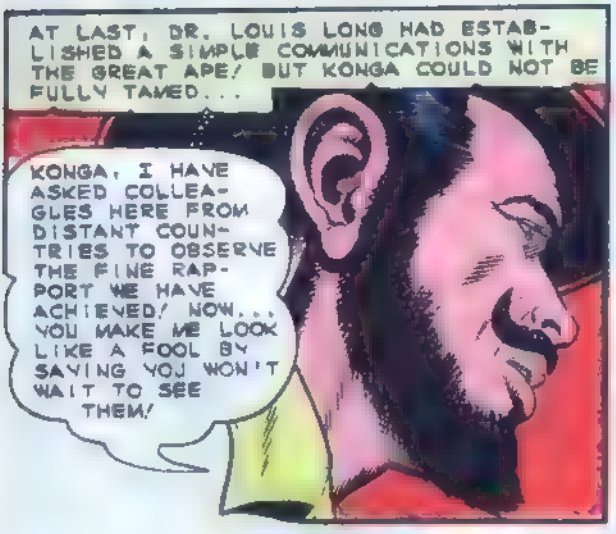
THIS WAS IMPORTANT NOW/ IF THE SCIENTIST WAS RIGHT...KONGA WOULD UNDERSTAND IN SOME WAY/ PERHAPS TELEPATHY...OR HIS BRAIN WOULD RECOGNIZE WORDS...WHATEVER WAY, KONGA MUST REACT TO THIS QUESTION/

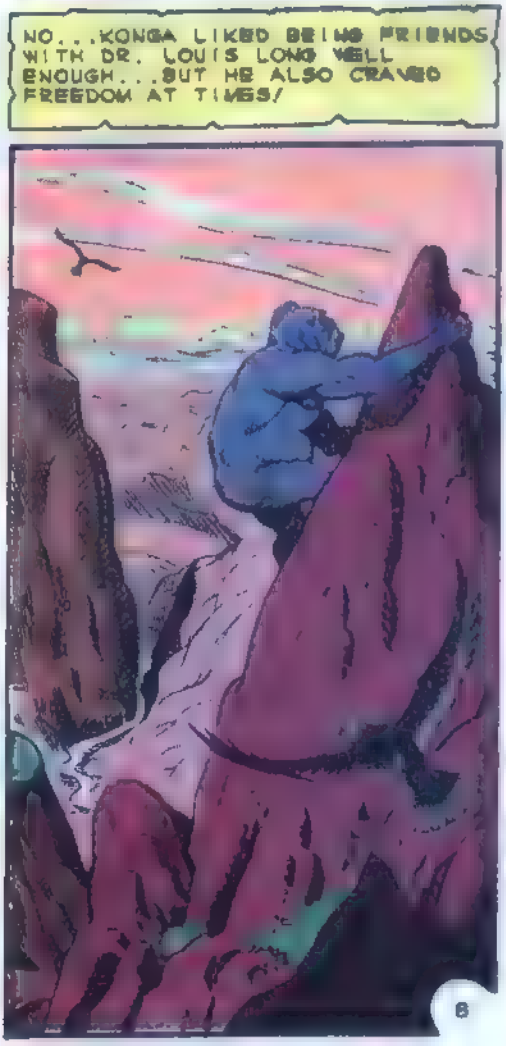
MANKIND HAS TRIED TO KILL YOU, KONGA, ONLY BECAUSE YOU ARE GREAT IN SIZE AND UNLIMITED IN STRENGTH/ IF YOU WILLED, YOU COULD DESTROY OUR GREATEST CITIES/ YOU COULD MAKE WAR ON MAN AND MAN WOULD LOSE MANY LIVES/ SO, I WISH TO BE YOUR FRIEND/

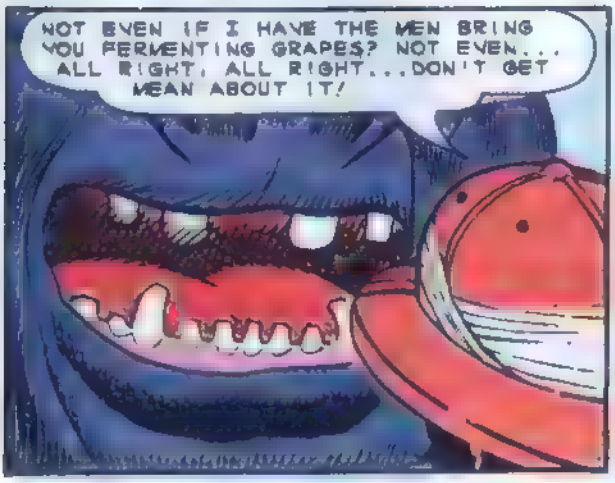
THEY CONVERSED/ AFTER A TIME, THE SCIENTIST WHOSE NAME WAS LOUIS LONG WAS ABLE TO ASK QUESTIONS, GET A QUICK, INTELLIGENT GRUNT OF ASSENT OR DISAGREEMENT...

IT TOOK A LONG CONVERSATION TO DETERMINE THE REASON WHY KONGA DID NOT AGREE WITH THIS PHASE OF THE SCIENTIST'S PLAN...


I SEE? YOU HATE WAR AS MUCH AS I DO...BUT YOU WILL NOT TAKE ANY ACTION UNTIL YOU KNOW THE REASONS UNDERLYING THE WAR AND ARE CERTAIN YOU KNOW WHICH NATION IS GUILTY OF AGGRESSION!


AT LAST, DR. LOUIS LONG HAD ESTABLISHED A SIMPLE COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE GREAT APE! BUT KONGA COULD NOT BE FULLY TAMED...
KONGA, I HAVE ASKED COLLEAGUES HERE FROM DISTANT COUNTRIES TO OBSERVE THE FINE RAPPORT WE HAVE ACHIEVED! NOW... YOU MAKE ME LOOK LIKE A FOOL BY SAYING YOU WON'T WAIT TO SEE THEM!



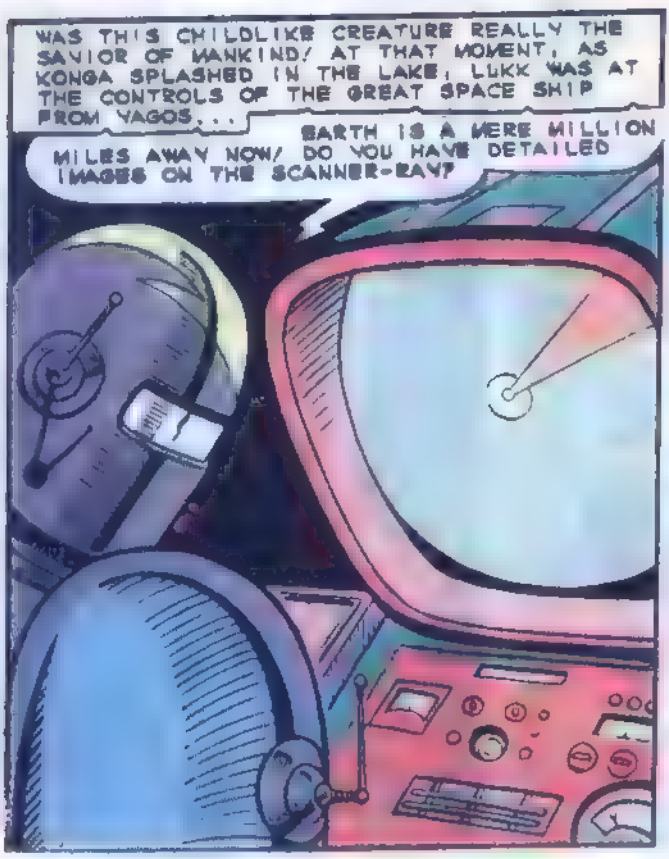


KONGA

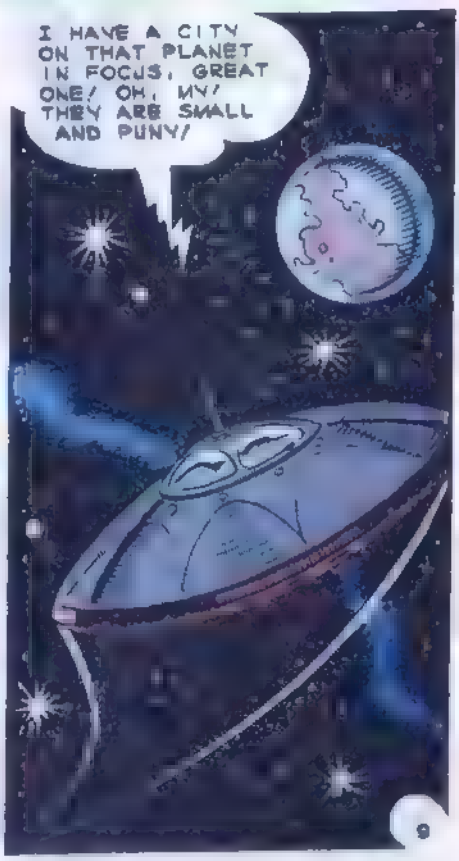
REVELING UNDER THE 500 FOOT HIGH WATERFALL, SCRATCHING HIS BACK WITH A HUGE TREE FROM THE RAIN FOREST, KONGA WASHED AWAY THE TRAPPED FEELING THAT PROLONGED CONTACT WITH MANKIND ALWAYS GAVE HIM!

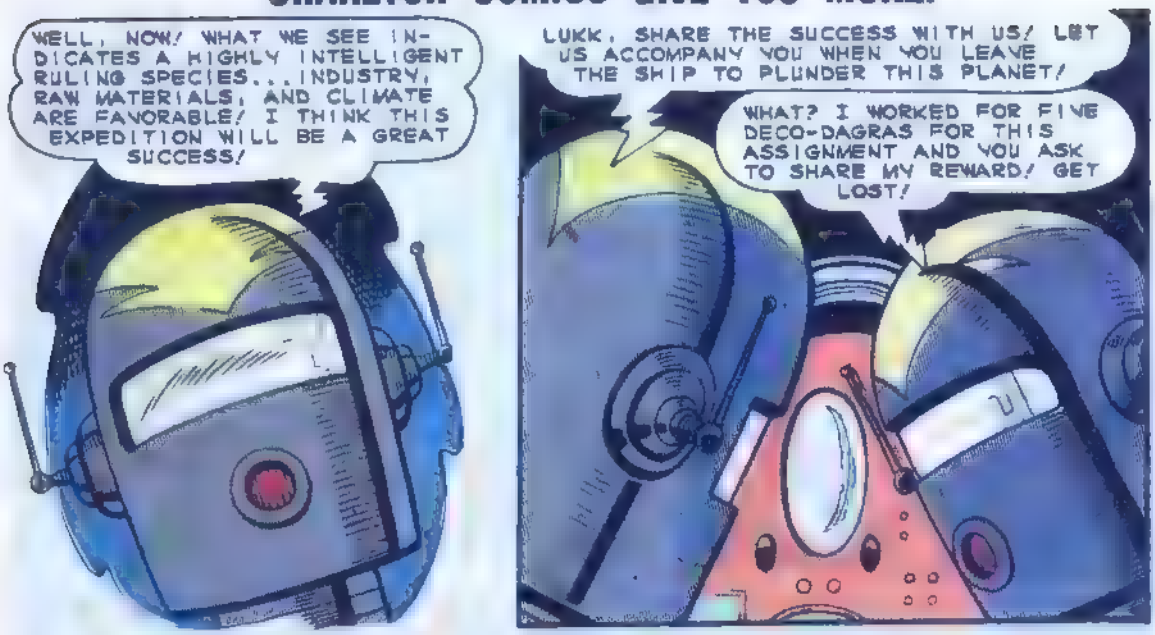
WAS THIS CHILDLIKE CREATURE REALLY THE SAVIOR OF MANKIND! AT THAT MOMENT, AS KONGA SPLASHED IN THE LAKE, LUKK WAS AT THE CONTROLS OF THE GREAT SPACE SHIP FROM YAGOS...

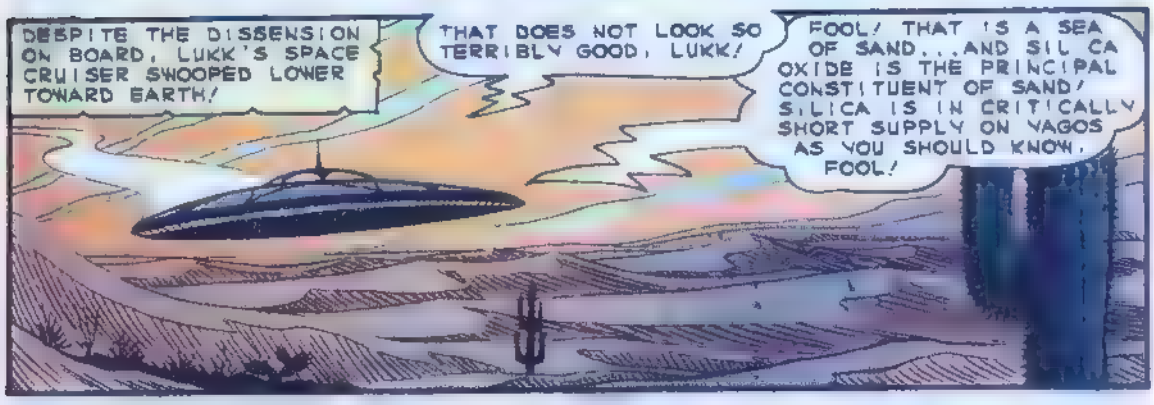
EARTH IS A MERE MILLION MILES AWAY NOW! DO YOU HAVE DETAILED IMAGES ON THE SCANNER-RAY?

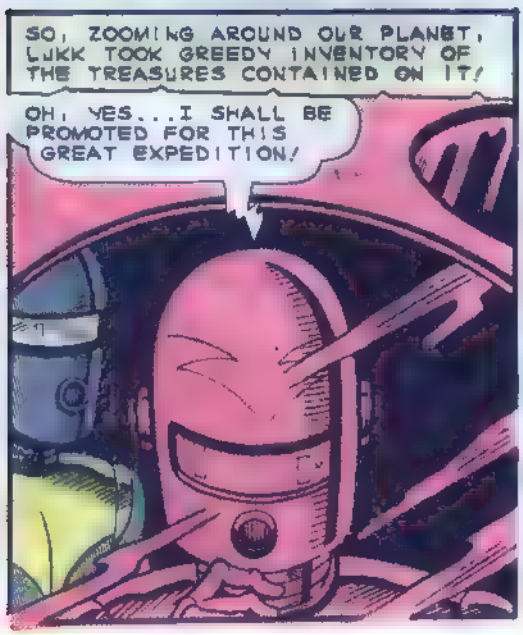


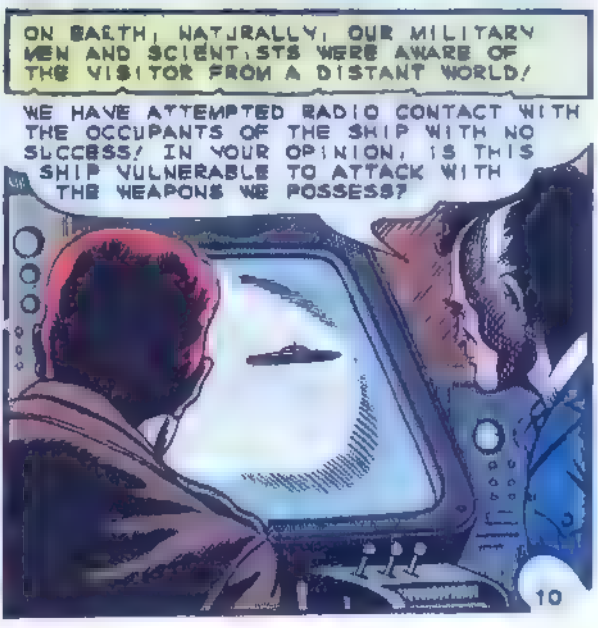
I HAVE A CITY ON THAT PLANET IN FOCUS. GREAT ONE! OH, MY! THEY ARE SMALL AND PUNY!




WELL, NOW! WHAT WE SEE INDICATES A HIGHLY INTELLIGENT RULING SPECIES...INDUSTRY, RAW MATERIALS, AND CLIMATE ARE FAVORABLE! I THINK THIS EXPEDITION WILL BE A GREAT SUCCESS!
LUKK, SHARE THE SUCCESS WITH US! LET US ACCOMPANY YOU WHEN YOU LEAVE THE SHIP TO PLUNDER THIS PLANET!
WHAT? I WORKED FOR FIVE DECO-DAGRAS FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT AND YOU ASK TO SHARE MY REWARD! GET LOST!


DESPITE THE DISSENSION ON BOARD, LUKK'S SPACE CRUISER SWOOPED LOWER TOWARD EARTH!
THAT DOES NOT LOOK SO TERRIBLY GOOD, LUKK!
FOOL! THAT IS A SEA OF SAND...AND SIL CA OXIDE IS THE PRINCIPAL CONSTITUENT OF SAND! SILICA IS IN CRITICALLY SHORT SUPPLY ON VAGOS AS YOU SHOULD KNOW, FOOL!


SO, ZOOMING AROUND OUR PLANET, LUKK TOOK GREEDY INVENTORY OF THE TREASURES CONTAINED ON IT!
OH, YES...I SHALL BE PROMOTED FOR THIS GREAT EXPEDITION!


ON EARTH, NATURALLY, OUR MILITARY MEN AND SCIENTISTS WERE AWARE OF THE VISITOR FROM A DISTANT WORLD!
WE HAVE ATTEMPTED RADIO CONTACT WITH THE OCCUPANTS OF THE SHIP WITH NO SUCCESS! IN YOUR OPINION, IS THIS SHIP VULNERABLE TO ATTACK WITH THE WEAPONS WE POSSESS?

FRANKLY, GENERAL, NO! I DO NOT THINK MAN'S WEAPONS WILL BE EFFECTIVE! THIS SPACE SHIP IS IMMENSE...FIFTY TIMES LARGER THAN ANY WE POSSESS! THE HULL WOULD BE VERY THICK...OF A METAL IMMUNE TO HEAT AND SHOCK!
THE AIR FORCES OF THE WORLD NEVERTHELESS TOOK OFFENSIVE ACTION!
THEIR MOST POTENT WEAPONS ARE USELESS AGAINST US! NOW...THEY MUST BE SHOWN THE SUPERIORITY OF OUR OFFENSIVE SYSTEMS!

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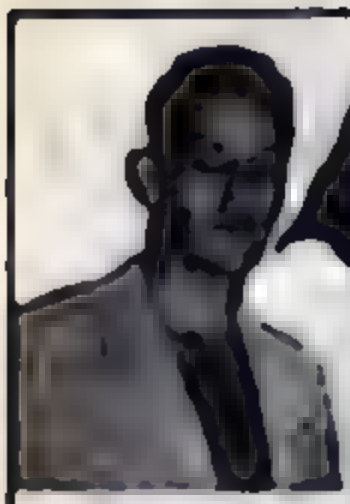
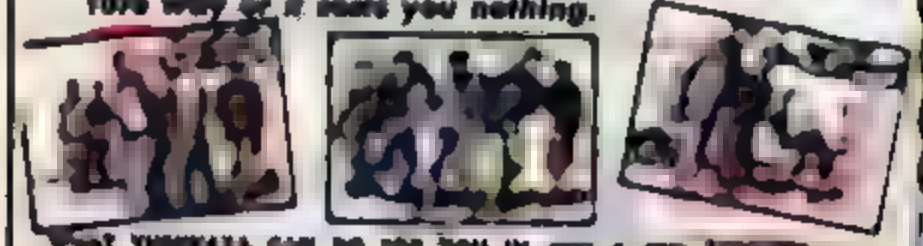


BOYS! MEN! I'LL HELP YOU MASTER YUBIWAZA

says N. J. FLEMING — YUBIWAZA MASTER

"YUBIWAZA IS THE SECRET, AMAZINGLY EASY ART OF SELF-DEFENSE THAT TURNS JUST ONE FINGER OR YOUR HANDS INTO A POTENT WEAPON OF DEFENSE — WITHOUT ANY BODILY CONTACT...!

In just 3 hours after you receive "YUBIWAZA" you will be on your way to being an invincible Yubiwaza Master, at home, this Fast, EASY picture way or it costs you nothing.



"I WEIGH ONLY 98 LBS. — YET I CAN PARALYZE A 200 POUND ATTACKER WITH JUST A FINGER —BECAUSE I KNOW YUBIWAZA!" says Yoshie Imagawa — Pretty Japanese wife of N. J. Fleming — Yubiwaza Master

MASTER EVERY SITUATION!

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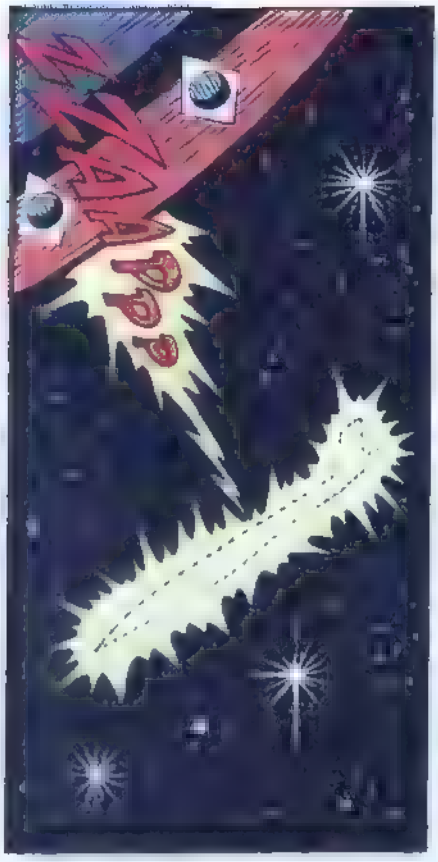
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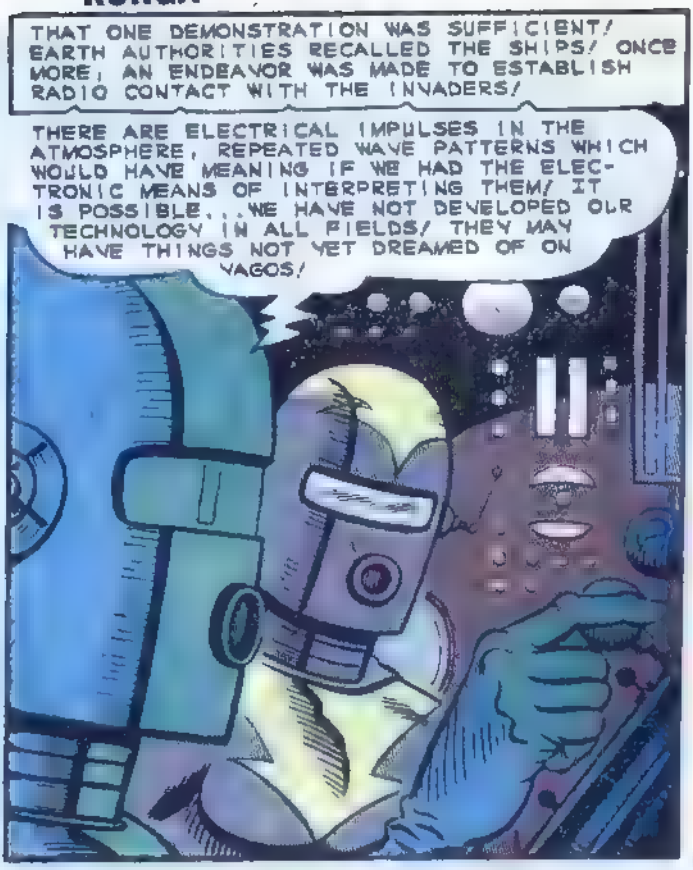
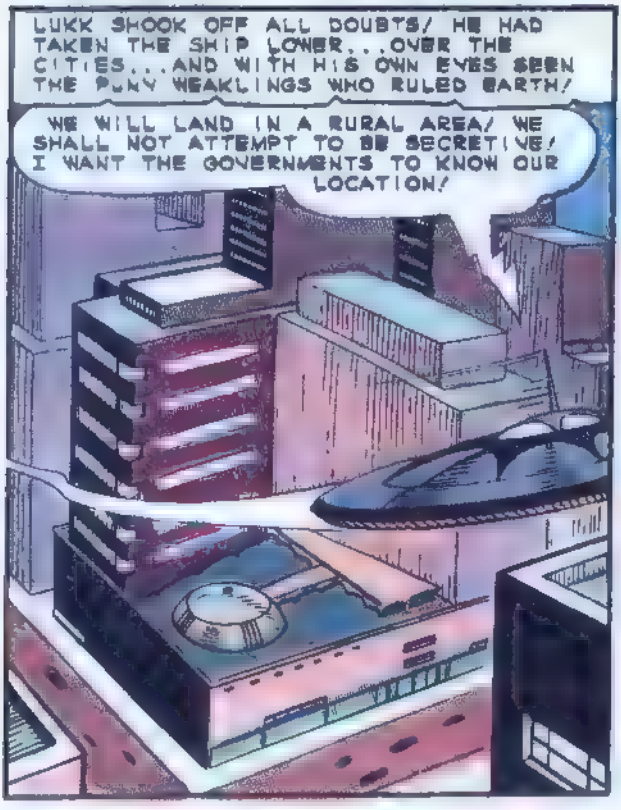
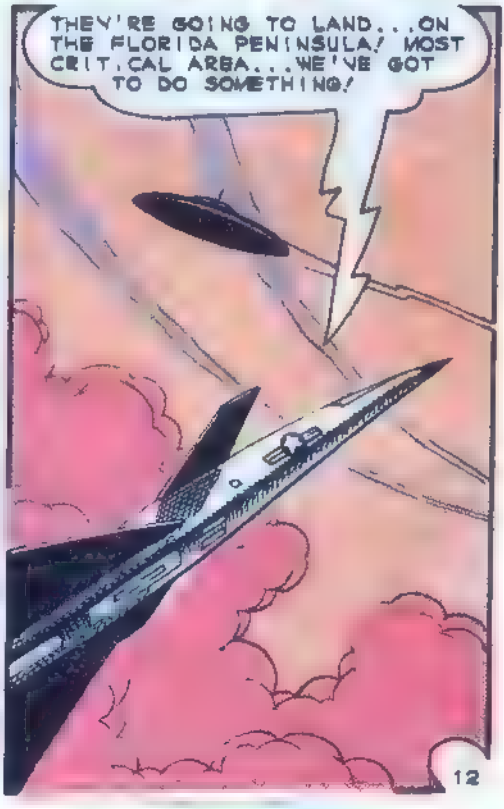
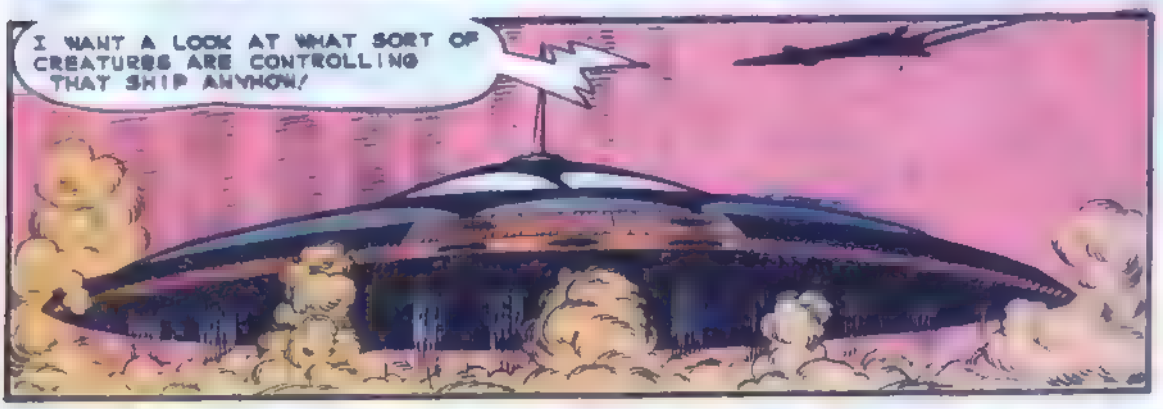

THAT ONE DEMONSTRATION WAS SUFFICIENT/ EARTH AUTHORITIES RECALLED THE SHIPS/ ONCE MORE, AN ENDEAVOR WAS MADE TO ESTABLISH RADIO CONTACT WITH THE INVADERS/
THERE ARE ELECTRICAL IMPULSES IN THE ATMOSPHERE, REPEATED WAVE PATTERNS WHICH WOULD HAVE MEANING IF WE HAD THE ELECTRONIC MEANS OF INTERPRETING THEM/ IT IS POSSIBLE...WE HAVE NOT DEVELOPED OUR TECHNOLOGY IN ALL FIELDS/ THEY MAY HAVE THINGS NOT YET DREAMED OF ON VAGOS/

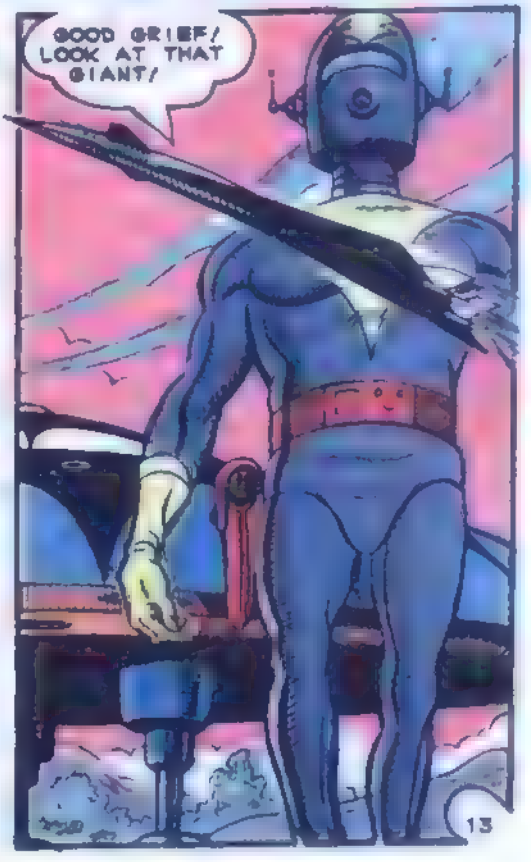

LUKK SHOOK OFF ALL DOUBTS/ HE HAD TAKEN THE SHIP LOWER...OVER THE CITIES...AND WITH HIS OWN EYES SEEN THE PUNY WEAKLINGS WHO RULED EARTH/
WE WILL LAND IN A RURAL AREA/ WE SHALL NOT ATTEMPT TO BE SECRETIVE/ I WANT THE GOVERNMENTS TO KNOW OUR LOCATION/

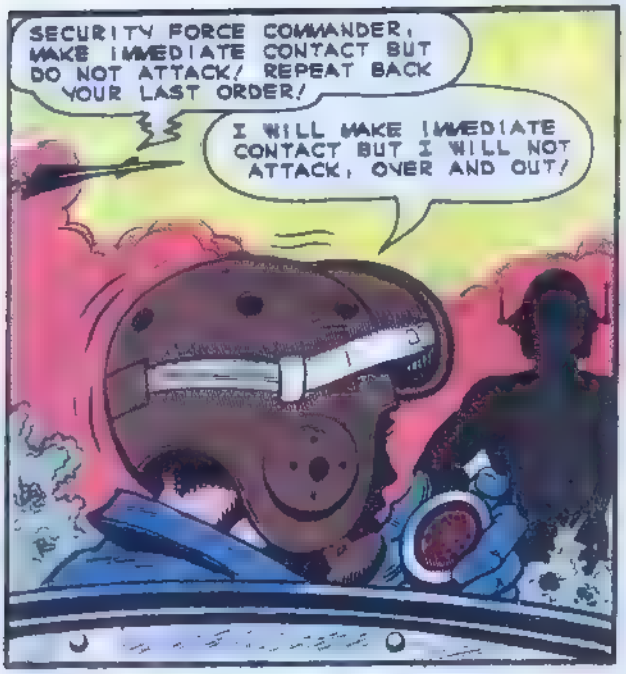

THEY'RE GOING TO LAND...ON THE FLORIDA PENINSULA/ MOST CRITICAL AREA...WE'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING/

WE'RE CARRYING THE VERY LATEST IN WEAPONRY, SIR/ THE MULTI-MISSILE POD WHICH...
IT WOULD AVAIL US LITTLE, MAJOR/ NOW...LET THEM LAND/

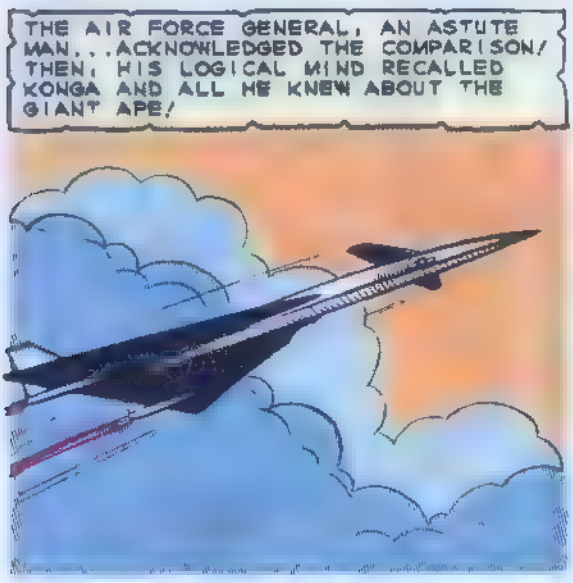

I WANT A LOOK AT WHAT SORT OF CREATURES ARE CONTROLLING THAT SHIP ANYHOW/

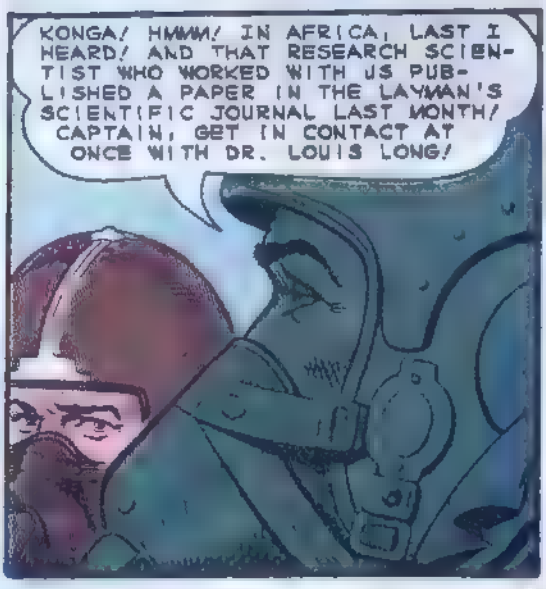
TELEVISION CAMERAS WERE FOCUSED ON THE STRANGER/ THE WORLD WAITED...
JUNIOR, YOU PUT YOUR EDUCATIONAL CHANNEL BACK ON THIS INSTANT/ THE IDEA...WATCHING TRASHY SPACE-MAN MOVIES/
THIS AIN'T NO MOVIE, MOM/

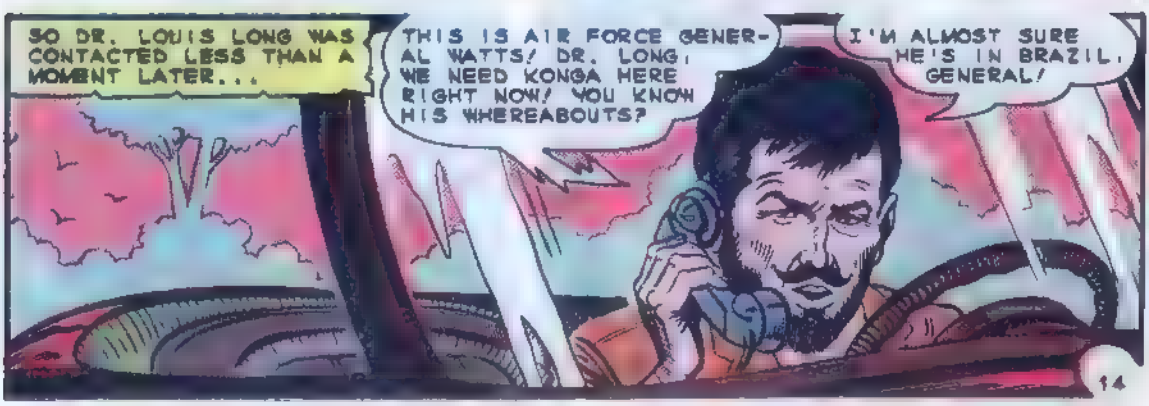

GOOD GRIEF/ LOOK AT THAT GIANT/

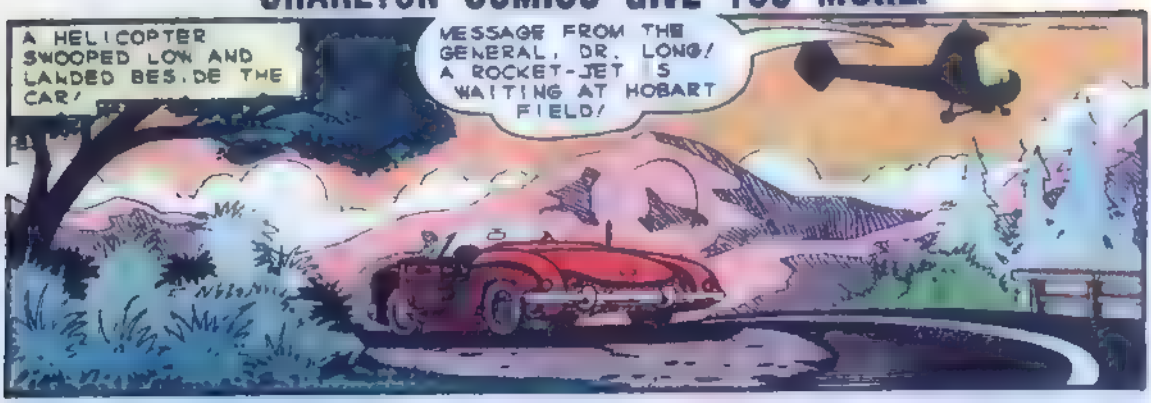

SECURITY FORCE COMMANDER, MAKE IMMEDIATE CONTACT BUT DO NOT ATTACK/ REPEAT BACK YOUR LAST ORDER/
I WILL MAKE IMMEDIATE CONTACT BUT I WILL NOT ATTACK, OVER AND OUT/

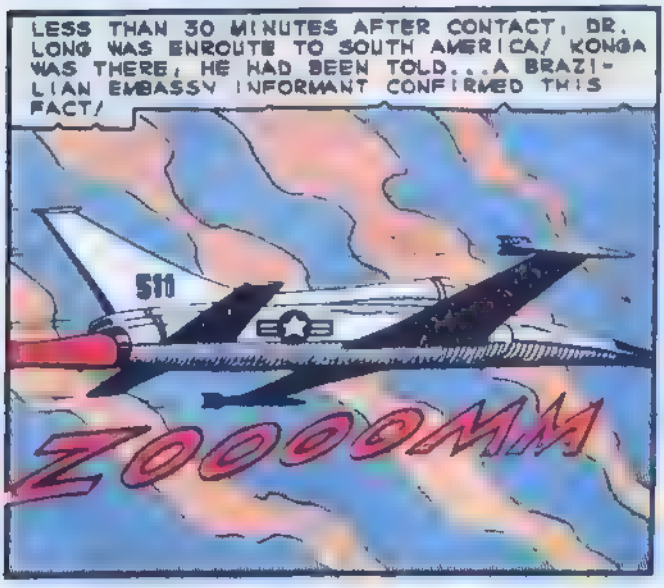
IT WOULDN'T DO MUCH GOOD TO ATTACK THIS CREATURE/ IT'S AS B.G OR BIGGER THAN THAT HUGE APE THAT BATTED US AROUND IN THE ARCTIC LAST YEAR/

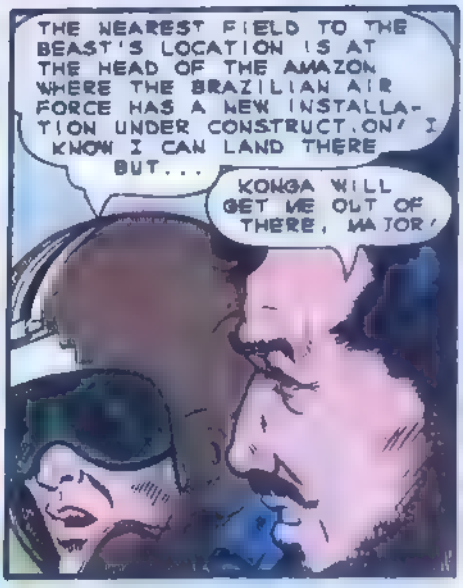

THE AIR FORCE GENERAL, AN ASTUTE MAN...ACKNOWLEDGED THE COMPARISON/ THEN, HIS LOGICAL MIND RECALLED KONGA AND ALL HE KNEW ABOUT THE GIANT APE/


KONGA/ HMMM/ IN AFRICA, LAST I HEARD/ AND THAT RESEARCH SCIENTIST WHO WORKED WITH US PUBLISHED A PAPER IN THE LAYMAN'S SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL LAST MONTH/ CAPTAIN, GET IN CONTACT AT ONCE WITH DR. LOUIS LONG/


SO DR. LOUIS LONG WAS CONTACTED LESS THAN A MOMENT LATER...
THIS IS AIR FORCE GENERAL WATTS/ DR. LONG, WE NEED KONGA HERE RIGHT NOW/ YOU KNOW HIS WHEREABOUTS?
I'M ALMOST SURE HE'S IN BRAZIL, GENERAL/

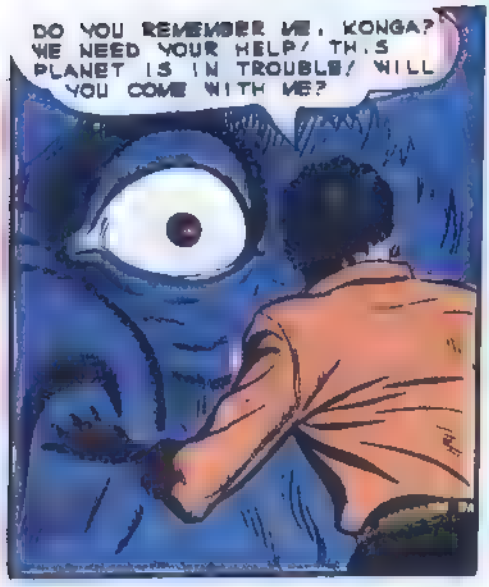

A HELICOPTER SWOOPED LOW AND LANDED BESIDE THE CAR/
MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL, DR. LONG/ A ROCKET-JET IS WAITING AT HOBART FIELD/

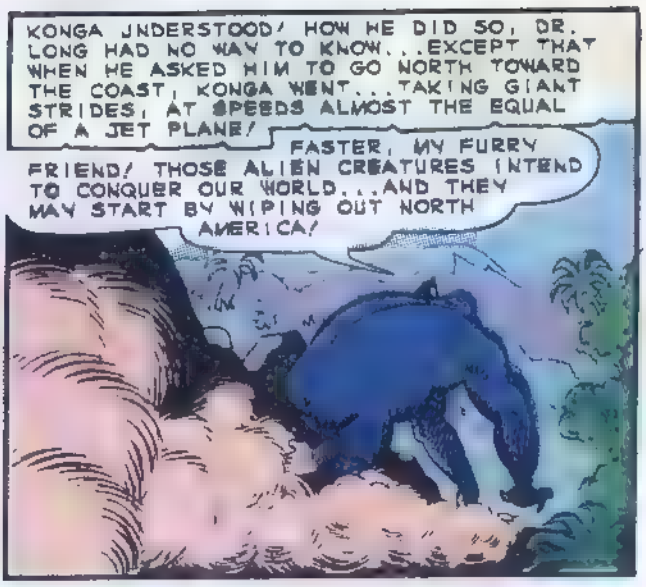

LESS THAN 30 MINUTES AFTER CONTACT, DR. LONG WAS ENROUTE TO SOUTH AMERICA/ KONGA WAS THERE; HE HAD BEEN TOLD...A BRAZILIAN EMBASSY INFORMANT CONFIRMED THIS FACT/
511
ZOOOOMM

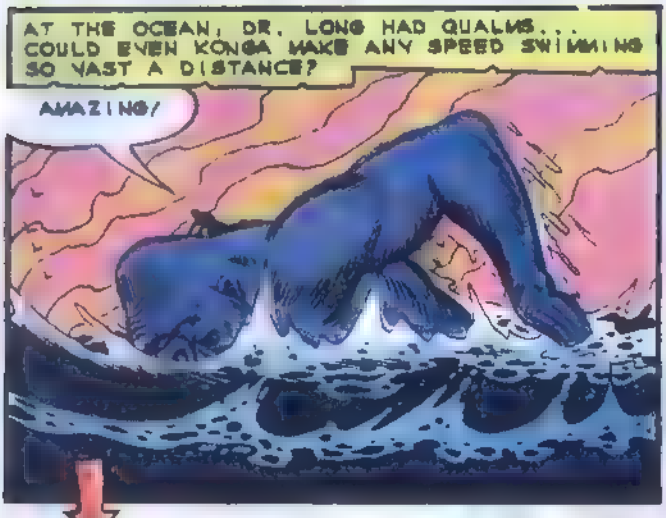

THE NEAREST FIELD TO THE BEAST'S LOCATION IS AT THE HEAD OF THE AMAZON WHERE THE BRAZILIAN AIR FORCE HAS A NEW INSTALLATION UNDER CONSTRUCTION/ I KNOW I CAN LAND THERE BUT...
KONGA WILL GET ME OUT OF THERE, MAJOR/

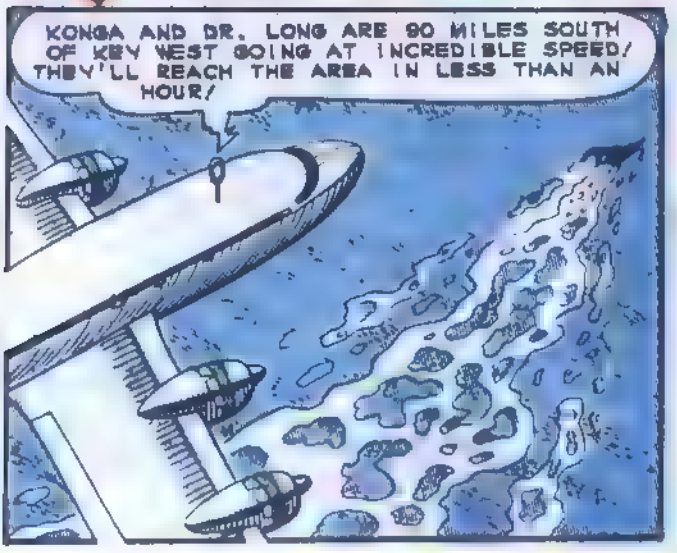
THERE'S KONGA NOW/ TURN AND COME BACK OVER HIM, MAJOR/ I'LL PARACHUTE DOWN/ IT'S THE QUICKEST WAY/

A MOMENT LATER...
I SURE HOPE HE REMEMBERS ME/

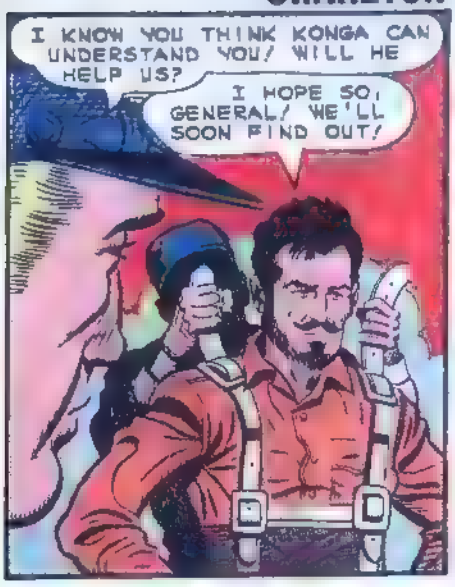

DO YOU REMEMBER ME, KONGA? WE NEED YOUR HELP! THIS PLANET IS IN TROUBLE! WILL YOU COME WITH ME?

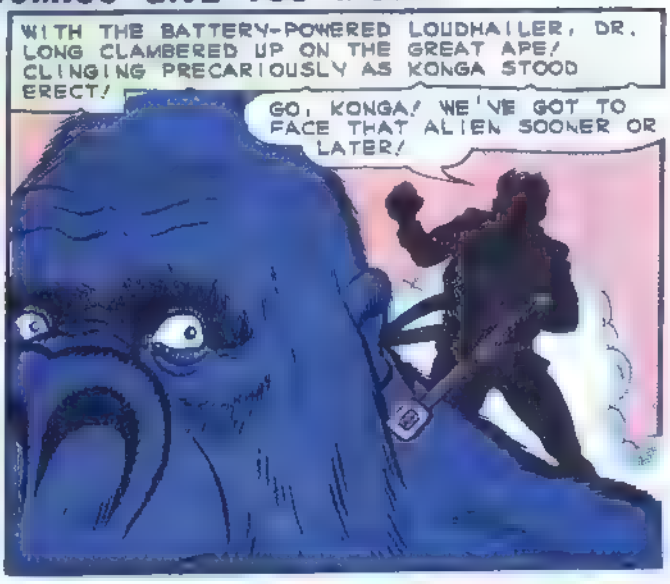

KONGA UNDERSTOOD! HOW HE DID SO, DR. LONG HAD NO WAY TO KNOW...EXCEPT THAT WHEN HE ASKED HIM TO GO NORTH TOWARD THE COAST, KONGA WENT...TAKING GIANT STRIDES, AT SPEEDS ALMOST THE EQUAL OF A JET PLANE!
FASTER, MY FURRY FRIEND! THOSE ALIEN CREATURES INTEND TO CONQUER OUR WORLD...AND THEY MAY START BY WIPING OUT NORTH AMERICA!

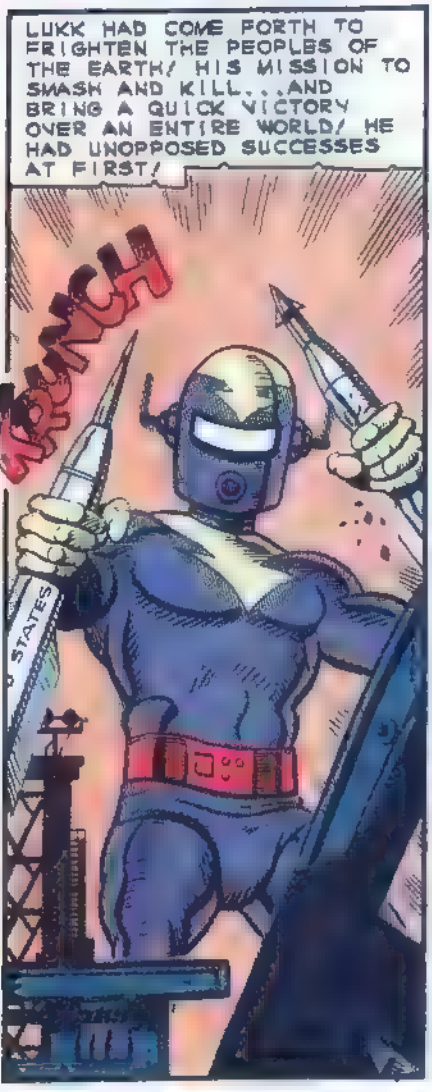

AT THE OCEAN, DR. LONG HAD QUALMS... COULD EVEN KONGA MAKE ANY SPEED SWIMMING SO VAST A DISTANCE?
AMAZING!

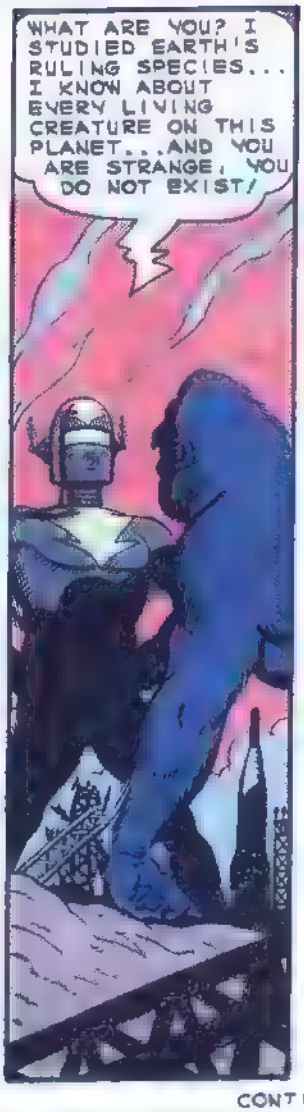

KONGA AND DR. LONG ARE 90 MILES SOUTH OF KEY WEST GOING AT INCREDIBLE SPEED! THEY'LL REACH THE AREA IN LESS THAN AN HOUR!

45 MINUTES LATER...
HOW BAD IS IT? HAS THIS YAGOLIAN CREATURE TAKEN MANY LIVES?
NOT DIRECTLY...ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN SOME HEART FAILURE CASES HERE ON BASE! NOW...STRAP THIS ON!




WITH THE BATTERY-POWERED LOUDHAILER, DR. LONG CLAMBERED UP ON THE GREAT APE/ CLINGING PRECARIOUSLY AS KONGA STOOD ERECT/
GO, KONGA/ WE'VE GOT TO FACE THAT ALIEN SOONER OR LATER/


LUKK HAD COME FORTH TO FRIGHTEN THE PEOPLES OF THE EARTH/ HIS MISSION TO SMASH AND KILL...AND BRING A QUICK VICTORY OVER AN ENTIRE WORLD/ HE HAD UNOPPOSED SUCCESSES AT FIRST/
KRUNCH
STATES


WHAT ARE YOU? I STUDIED EARTH'S RULING SPECIES... I KNOW ABOUT EVERY LIVING CREATURE ON THIS PLANET...AND YOU ARE STRANGE. YOU DO NOT EXIST/

I DO EXIST...AND YOUR THREATS AND VIOLENCE WILL NOT WIN YOU THE EASY VICTORY YOU SEEK/
YOU IGNORANT BEAST/ IT W LL TAKE ONE SECOND TO ELIMINATE YOU COMPLETELY/
17

CONTINUED AFTER FOLLOWING PAGE

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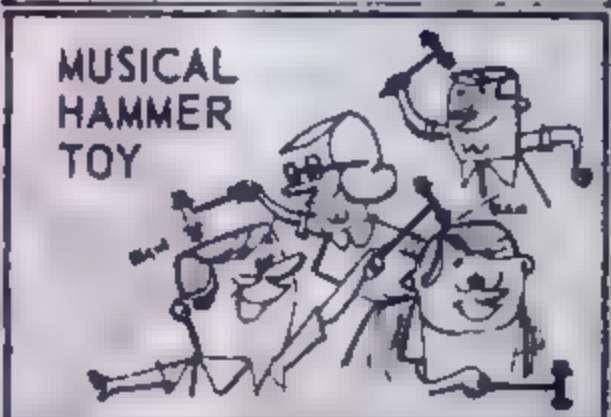

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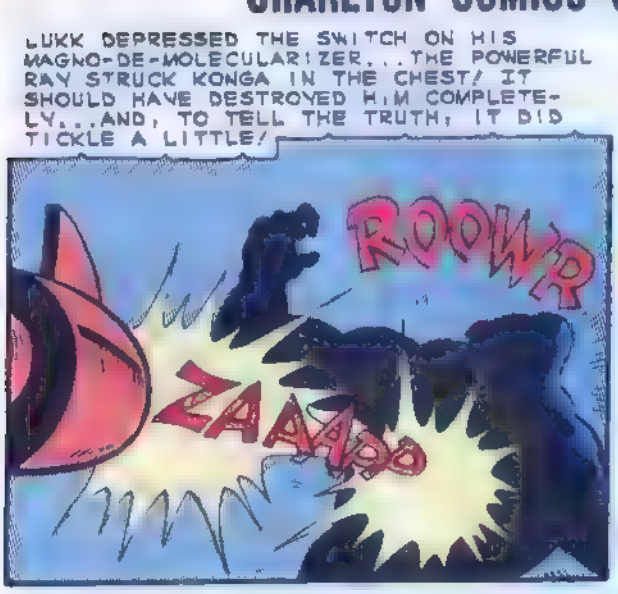
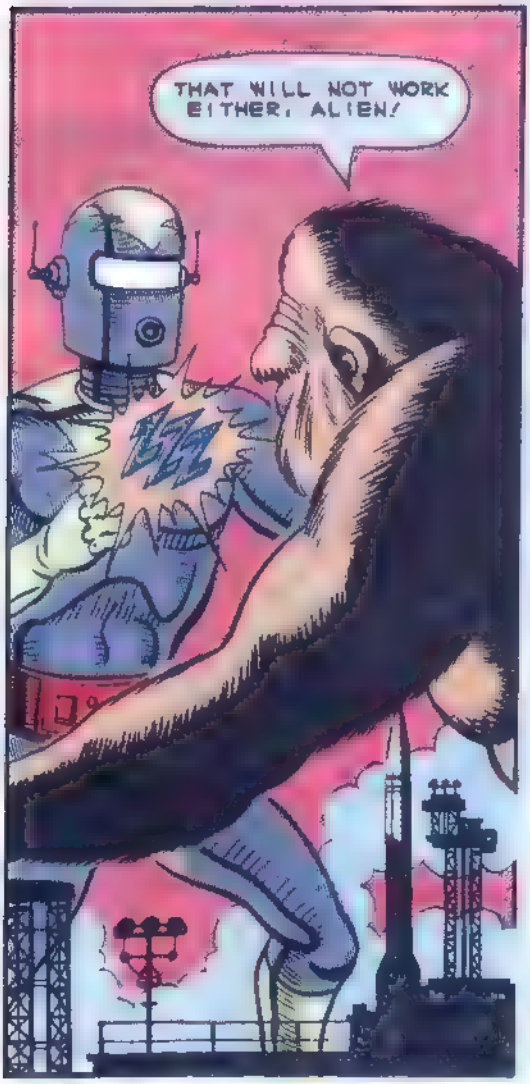
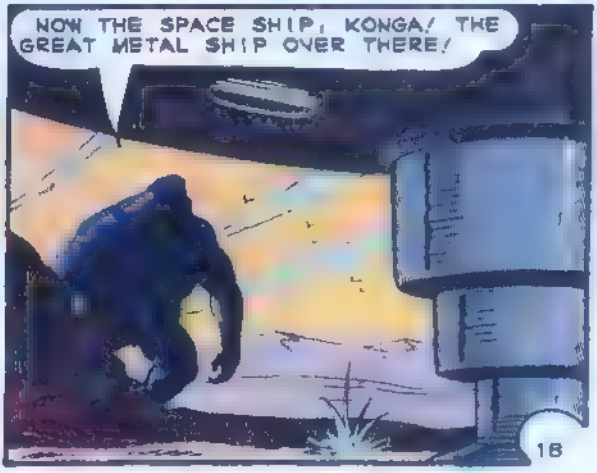

LUKK DEPRESSED THE SWITCH ON HIS MAGNO-DE-MOLECULARIZER...THE POWERFUL RAY STRUCK KONGA IN THE CHEST! IT SHOULD HAVE DESTROYED HIM COMPLETELY...AND, TO TELL THE TRUTH, IT DID TICKLE A LITTLE!
ROOWR
ZAAAPP

ATTACK HIM, KONGA! THEY THREATEN ALL MANKIND...

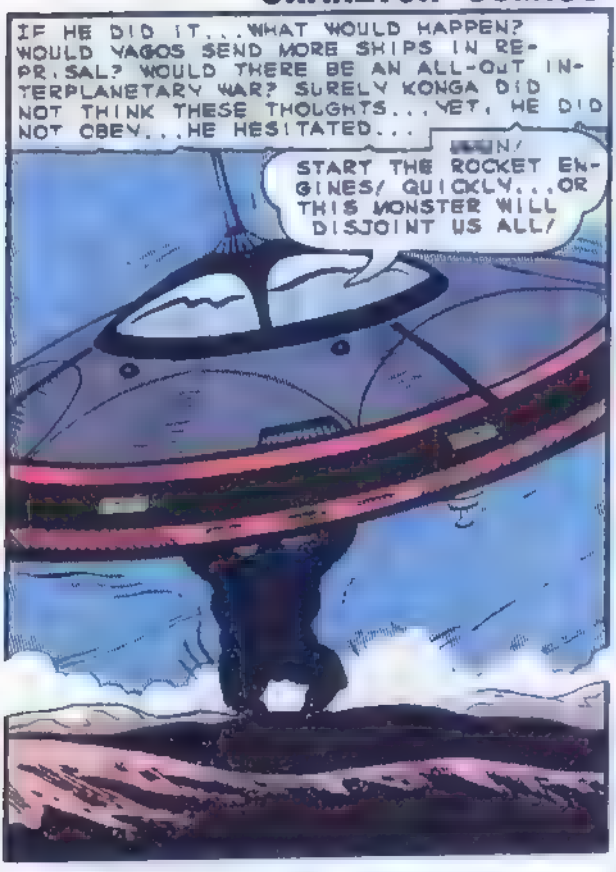

THAT WILL NOT WORK EITHER, ALIEN!
ZZZ

POW


NOW THE SPACE SHIP, KONGA! THE GREAT METAL SHIP OVER THERE!

KONGA WAS SMASHED BY STRANGE WEAPONS...DR. LONG FELT BLISTERING HEAT.. HIS FLESH SEEMED TORN BY ELECTRICAL CHARGES HURLED BY THE ALIEN SHIP/ BUT KONGA, BATTERED AND WEAKENED, REELED TOWARD IT...
GO ON, KONGA/ WE'LL BOTH DIE IF WE FALTER NOW/ THE WORLD WILL PERISH IF WE FAIL/
ZAP
ZAP

THEN...KONGA'S GREAT STRENGTH WAS TAXED TO THE LIMIT/ WITH MUSCLES CRACKING...IN UNTOLD AGONY FROM BURNS, SHOCKS, AND JOLTING BLOWS/ YET, HE WAS EQUAL TO THE TASK..
NOW, KONGA/ NOW... SMASH IT TO THE GROUND/


IF HE DID IT...WHAT WOULD HAPPEN? WOULD VAGOS SEND MORE SHIPS IN RE-PR.SAL? WOULD THERE BE AN ALL-OUT IN-TERPLANETARY WAR? SURELY KONGA DID NOT THINK THESE THOUGHTS...YET, HE DID NOT OBEY...HE HESITATED...
[illegible]N/ START THE ROCKET EN-GINES/ QUICKLY...OR THIS MONSTER WILL DISJOINT US ALL/

Woosh

LIKE A BOY LAUNCHING A GREAT MODEL AIRCRAFT, KONGA TOSSED THE SPACE SHIP SKYWARD...THE ROCKET ENGINES TOOK HOLD...AND THE SHIP FROM VAGOS FLED BACK TO THAT PLANET AT FULL SPEED/ FORGOTTEN THE WAR WITH EARTH...FORGOTTEN THE GREAT SILICA BEDS...
SUCH WEALTH/
SUCH MONSTERS/ SUCH EASY MISSIONS I DON'T NEED/

AND KONGA? DR. LOLIS LONG TRIED TO COMMUNICATE THE GRATITUDE OF THE WORLD TO THE GREAT APE...IF KONGA UNDERSTOOD, HE GAVE NO SIGN/ FOR HE WAS WEARY AND HE SLEPT UN-DISTURBED/
END

DESTINATION DESTRUCTION!

We were two days out from Earthport, bound on our mission, when Space Cadet Anderson came into my cabin to tell me the news.

"Just found a stowaway in the escape hatch, sir. What shall I do?"

"Bring him into the plotting room. I will be there in five minutes," was my answer.

"Excuse me, sir," corrected the Space Cadet. "It isn't a he. It happens to be a female, and rather pretty at that."

Which explains how I came to be facing a rather pretty brown hair girl of about twenty years of age. Give or take a year either way. She was dressed in a faded pair of jeans and carried a small bag in her left hand.

"The law says that if I offer to pay my passage I am not to be considered a stowaway," she informed me. "I have the money with me and more than enough. So you will please have a cabin assigned to me. And since this is a X-2 Space Ship, I am well aware that it is a combination freighter and passenger ship. Will you inform the stewardess I am aboard."

She was cool and calm in the way she spoke. As though she had carefully rehearsed it all before. Of all the space ships that were in Earthport-she had to pick this one!

"You still must have a passport," I said severely.

She opened the little bag and took out her passport. It was green and that meant only one thing: She had an Interplanetary Diplomatic passport. I looked at it and my face turned a ghastly white. She was none other than Elsie Thanler, the daughter of Howard Thanler, Head of the Earth Council. What a peculiar twist of fate this all was And it didn't make any sense at all.

"Is anything wrong, sir?" she asked

"Everything," I sighed. "There are no other women aboard this craft. Not even a a stewardess. You will be given a cabin for yourself and you may have your meals with me."

"That's fine," she relpied. "When we come to Asteroid Mentos you can stop and drop me off there. My uncle, as you know, is Viceroy there."

"Before I say or do anything," I continued. "I want to know just why you decided to take a ride on this space ship. As your father's daughter you have a magnificent craft, The Monitor, at your service.

"My mother was trying to arrange a marriage for me with a man I despise. And since I am of age I thought I would go away for some time and visit my uncle. Which reminds me. Will you please send a radio message back to Earth to my father. Tell him not to worry about me," she said.

"We have no radio contact at all with Earth. Even our viso-screen set is dead. Nor will we have contact with any other planet or asteroid. And we ignore all passing crafts. For all practical purposes, we are a space ship that doesn't exist," I had to tell her.

She sat facing me for about ten minutes before she spoke again. She was trying to make sense out of what I had just told her

"What is your name, sir?" she finally asked.

"I am Commander William Roberts Letter II," I said slowly so that the significance of the name should be very clear to her. And it was from her next remark.

"I should have observed the resemblance to your honored father," she continued." It was a quarter of a century ago that he died in defence of Earth when the Martians unleashed their surprise attack on us And you are his son. You were almost court-

martialed for the remarks you made two years ago. But it was all quietly hushed up. When you said the Martians should get a dose of what they gave us."

She forced a smile to her face. Perhaps she had put two and two together and come to a logical conclusion. I had a cabin assigned to her. And she even asked if there was anything she could do to keep herself busy. We had tape recordings and picture reels as well as a large library of recent books. But I had to explain that she was confined to the rear section of the ship. She could go no other place. And so it continued for the next three weeks. We saw more and more of each other. And I began to realize what was happening to me as far as my feelings towards her were concerned. I would have to tell her the truth. She was with me in the plotting room and we both were looking at the milkyway through a small side observation window

"I'm not exactly a dumbbell," she began. "I have had a lot of time to do some cafeful thinking about you and this mysterious craft. Let's see how correct I am in my deductions. You are going on a one-way trip. Probably up front you have a lot of volunteers with some kind of special equipment. Maybe manned missiles or warheads on those little pilot planes. All manufactured very secretly, no doubt. My father must have known about this and given his consent. With a way out, if I know my father. If the attack failed, you would be disowned as a sort of pirate on his own. If it succeeded, you would be a hero. The man who freed Earth from the domination of Mars. But either way-you will be dead. And so will all those with you. And that includes myself."

Next thing I knew she was in my arms. I kissed her and then she cried for awhile Finally she wiped away her tears and made a very sensible suggestion.

"At least let me die by the side of my husband. We can be married since you as commander of this craft have the legal power to unite people in matrimony.

I took her by the hand and made an announcement over the inter-com. That I was going to visit my men with my bride-to-be. And so I took her to the forward part of the space ship. Where the men were busy assembling and rechecking the warheads on the pilot planes In three hours we would all assemble for the marriage and a celeberation. The ceremony was brief and recorded in the log book. Somehow the baker managed to create a large wedding cake. And there were smiles-even though they were tragic-on the face of my men. They all congratulated us and then went back to their work

We had deliberately avoided the regular passenger and freight routes in the Galexy. My plan was to go to the other side of the Planet Mars. As though we were a tramp air-freighter from the Planet Pluto and the outlying asteroids. This would bring me close to the side of the base where they kept their great fleet of war space ships. Then my men would launch themselves in the pilot planes in a death attack on the fleet. While those aboard the space ship-including, myself-would head for the capital of Mars. And go down in a blaze with our thermo-nuclear bombs set to go off

In spite of our impending doom, I must admit my wife was rather cheerful. And something of her spirit carried over to myself and to my men. They were all specially chosen men for this task. And a few of the older ones had even served under my father in the tragic war against Mars. We were getting closer and closer to our goal. My wife sat by my side at the side observation window.

"I often wonder what is in the second Galaxey," I told her. "If things had been different I would have gone on an expedition to the outer limits of the first Galaxey. There must be an almost endless chain of solar systems out there. Just a dream, perhaps."

Her head rested on my shoulder. It seemed so peaceful in spite of the fact that we were on such a terrible mission of destruction. And then in rushed Space Cadet Anderson with some startling news.

"There is a Venutian Space ship to our starboard, sir. Blinking out a recognition signal. They know our identity. We are to contact Earthport at once."

I jumped up at once and headed for the communication room which had been locked ever since we left Earth. I opened it and immediately made contact with Earthport. And the voice I heard was none other than that of Howard Thanler, Head of the Earth Council.

"There has been a revolution on Mars. A combined Venutian-Staurn Fleet had destroyed the Martian war fleet. You will be the Earth representative there with complete Ambassadorial Rank. Give our heartiest thanks to your men who volunteered to die for the freedom of Earth. They will all be suitably rewarded. Anything else you want to know?"

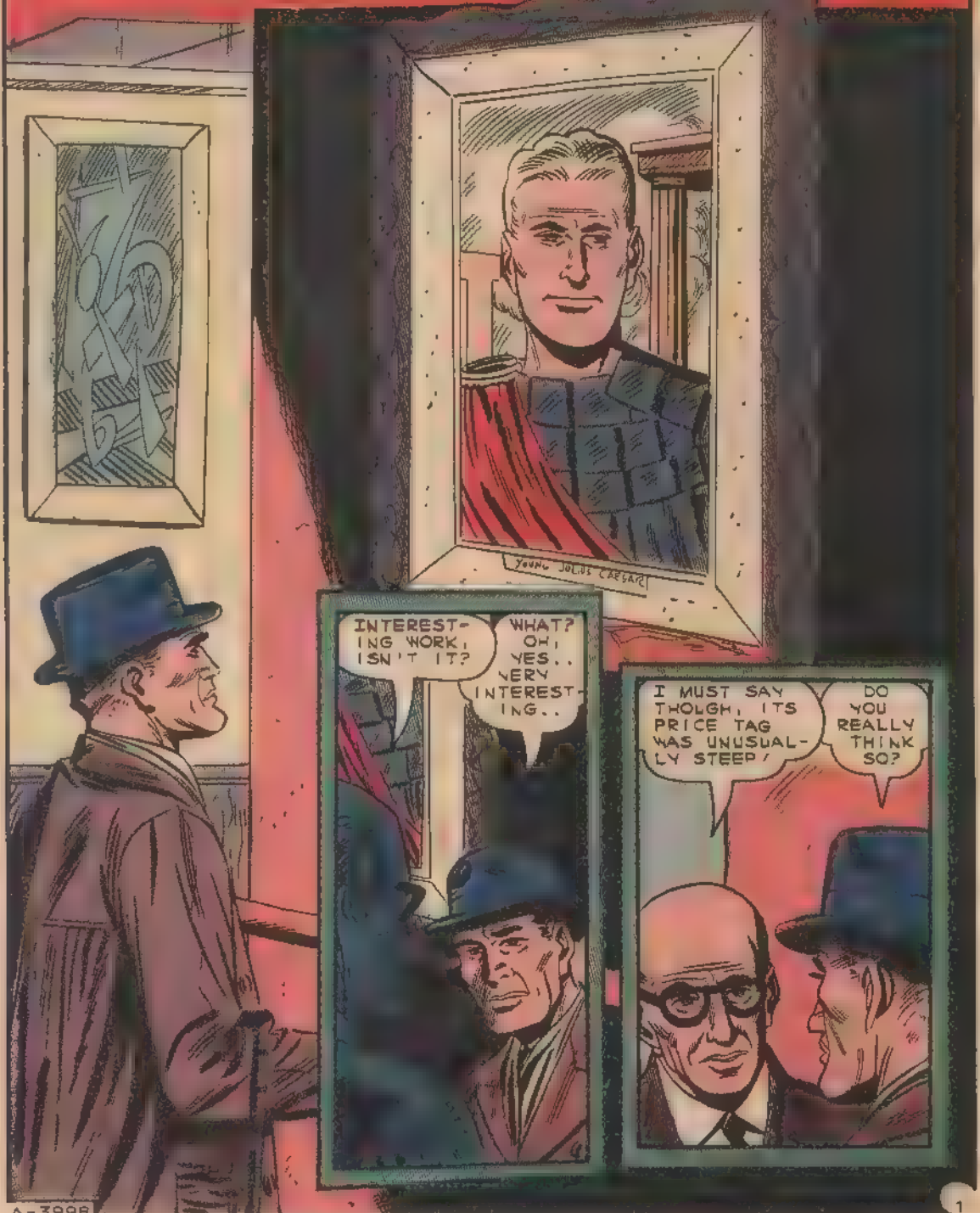
"I assume my wife will be there with me. She is aboard this craft."

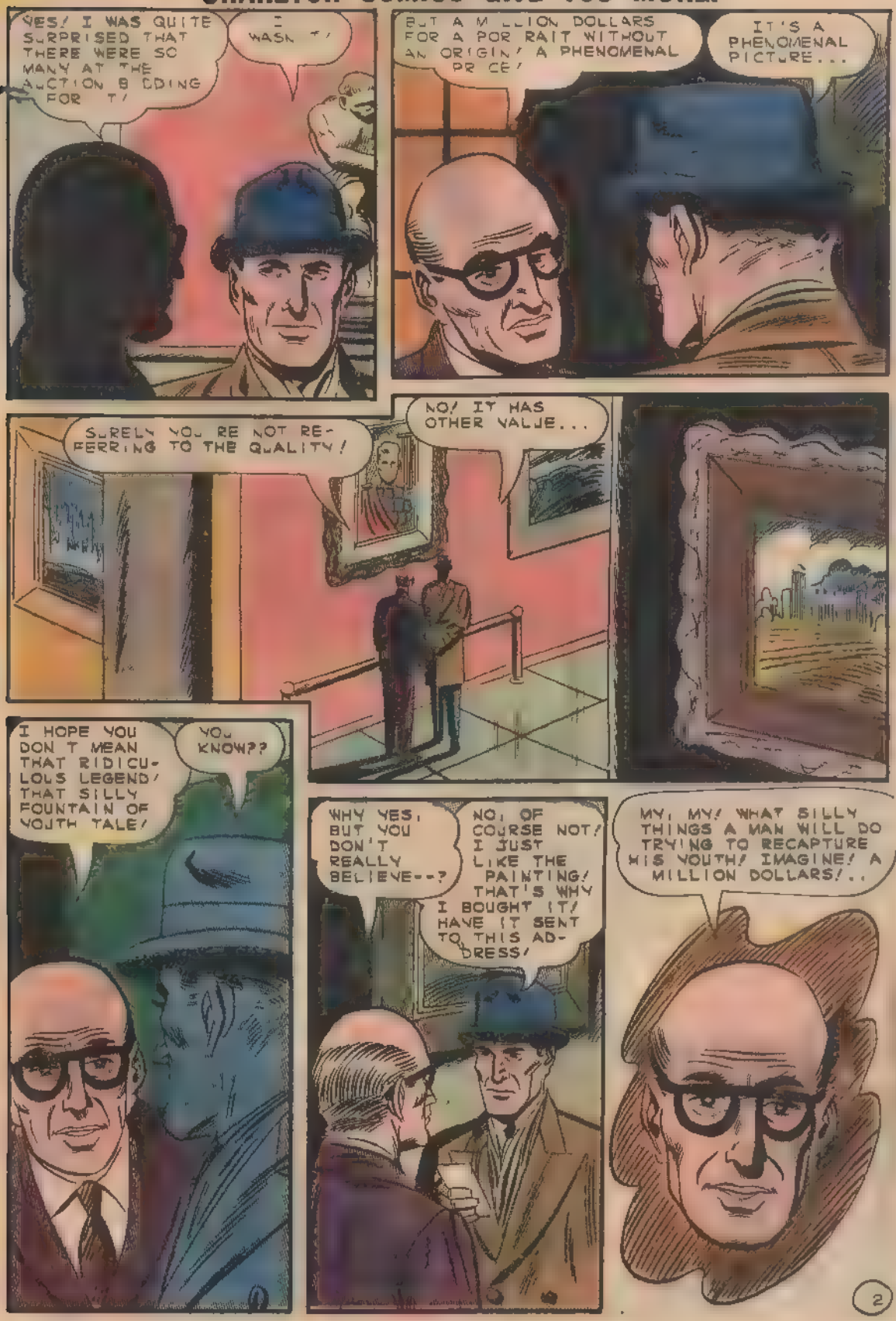
"What wife? Who are you talking about?" came back at me

"Your daughter, sir She was a stowaway and we are married. I think she will be most charming on Mars"

THE PAINTING DATED BACK TO AN UNKNOWN YEAR!..THE GIFTED HANDS THAT GAVE IT LIFE WERE A MYSTERY TO THE EXPERTS...AS FAR AS ANYONE COULD TELL, IT SEEMED TO JUST APPEAR FROM NOWHERE!...BUT A FEW KNEW!...KNEW OF THE STRANGE LEGEND THAT MADE MEN SPEND FORTUNES TO ACQUIRE IT!...KNEW OF ITS AMAZING POWER TO RESTORE AND REJUVENATE!...ONE SUCH MAN WAS AMOS ALTON.. AMOS ALTON KNEW OF...

THE PORTRAIT OF YOUTH


YOUNG JULIUS CAESAR
INTEREST-ING WORK, ISN'T IT?
WHAT? OH, YES.. VERY INTEREST-ING..
I MUST SAY THOUGH, ITS PRICE TAG WAS UNUSUAL-LY STEEP!
DO YOU REALLY THINK SO?


YES! I WAS QUITE SURPRISED THAT THERE WERE SO MANY AT THE AUCTION B DING FOR T!
I WASN T!
BUT A M LLION DOLLARS FOR A POR RAIT WITHOUT AN ORIGIN' A PHENOMENAL PR CE!
IT'S A PHENOMENAL PICTURE...
SURELY YOU RE NOT RE-FERRING TO THE QUALITY!
NO! IT HAS OTHER VALUE...
I HOPE YOU DON T MEAN THAT RIDICU-LOUS LEGEND! THAT SILLY FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH TALE!
YOU KNOW??
WHY YES, BUT YOU DON'T REALLY BELIEVE--?
NO, OF COURSE NOT! I JUST LIKE THE PAINTING! THAT'S WHY I BOUGHT IT! HAVE IT SENT TO THIS AD-DRESS!
MY, MY! WHAT SILLY THINGS A MAN WILL DO TRYING TO RECAPTURE HIS YOUTH! IMAGINE! A MILLION DOLLARS!..

KONGA

THE NEXT DAY...
YOU RE LOOKING WELL UNCLE AMOS/
HELLO JEFF/ WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE?
I READ IN THE PAPER THAT YOU PURCHASED THE FAMOUS MYSTERY PORTRAIT OF CAESAR/ I JUST CAME FROM AN INTERESTING CONVERSATION WITH THE DEALER AT THE GALLERY...
IT S VERY NICE, BUT FRANKLY, I CAN'T SEE SPENDING A MILLION DOLLARS ON IT/
THERE'S NO LIMIT TO ITS VALUE/
COME NOW, UNCLE/ A MILLION/
IT MAY BE WORTH MUCH MORE TO ME/
I SUPPOSE YOU'RE REFERRING TO THE LEGEND/ DO YOU REALLY THINK A PAINTING CAN RESTORE ONE'S YOUTH?
SCOFF AT ME IF YOU MUST/ BUT I OWN IT/ I!! AND WE'LL SOON SEE WHETHER A MILLION DOLLARS WAS TOO HIGH A PRICE TO PAY..!

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	Pasadena		Wonderful				
3	Under The Boards	4	Do You Love Me	43	Do Love You		
	Walk	50	Once Upon A		Beatles		
4	Bug Dust		Time	44	Please Please Me		
5	Wishin' And	69	Three Window	45	Hello Dolly		
	Hopin'		Coupe	46	The Shoop Shoop		
6	Nobody I Know	94	Chapel Of Love		Song		
7	I Want To Hold	53	Romeo And Juliet	47	Judy's Turn To		
	Your Hand	56	Love Me With All		Cry		
			Your Heart	48	More		
8	As Usual						
9	Da Doo Ron Ron	57	Blue Velvet	49	Green, Green		
	Da Doo Ron Ron	58	Dawned	50	If I Had A		
		59	Baby Workout		Hammer		
10	Surfin' Bird		Loadsa Love	51	Dance		
11	Anyone Who Had		Be My Baby	52	Wait Till My		
	A Heart	60	Then He Kissed		Daddy Gets Home		
12	Dominique	61	Me	53	Ya Ya		
13	Take These		A Walkin Miracle	54	Fun		
	Chains From My	62	Daddy's Home	55	Wild One		
	Heart	63	The Continental	56	Peggy Love		
14	Ain't That A	64	Walk	57	Mama		
	Shame		Mama Said	58	O Dio Mio		
15	This Little One	65	Runnin' Scared	59	I Love The Way		
16	Ron Ronnie	66	Tossin		You Love		
17	Da Doo Ron Ron	67	All My Love	60	You And You		
18	Silver Star	68					

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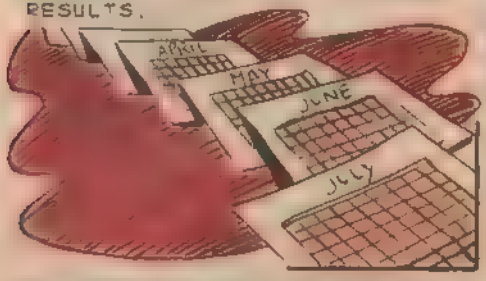
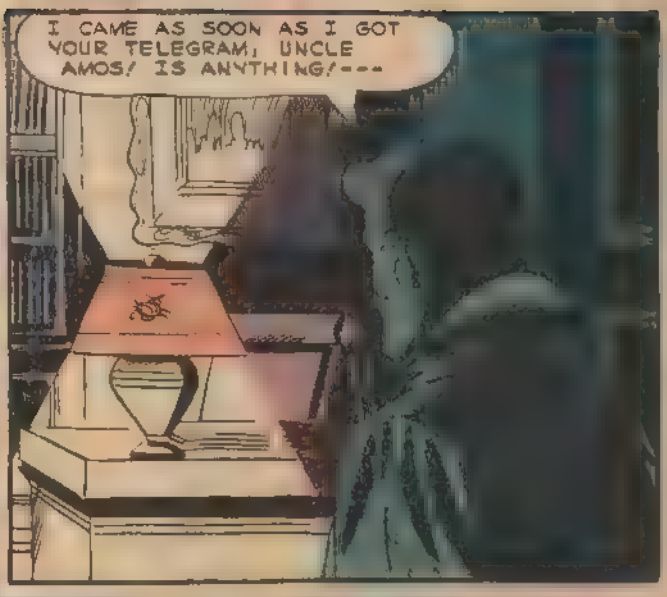
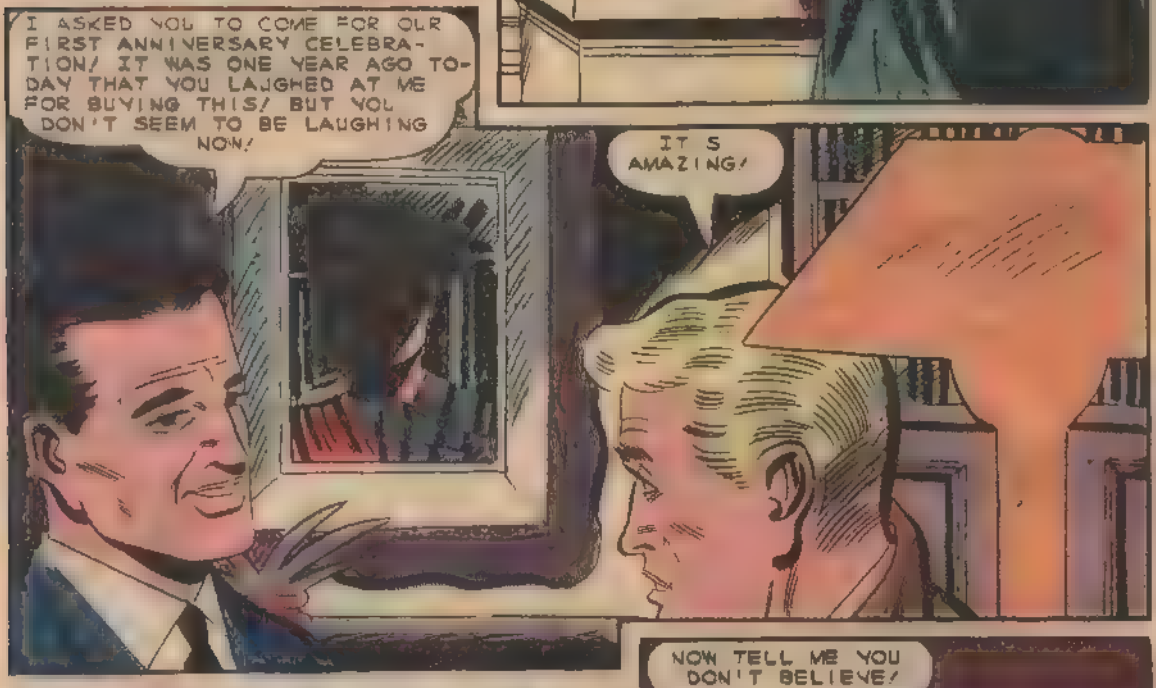
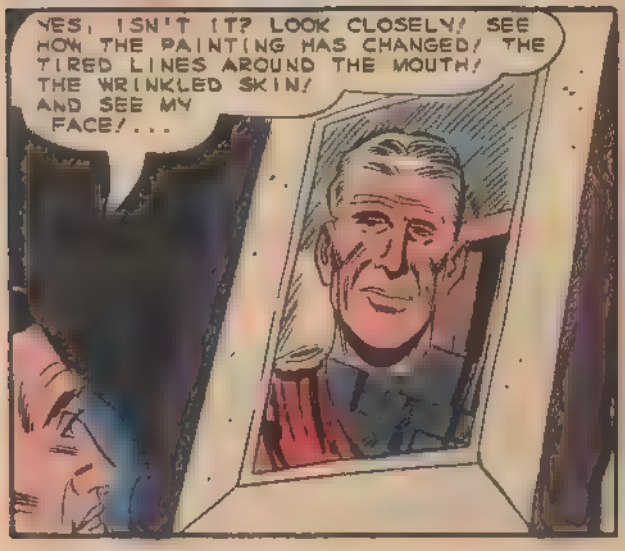
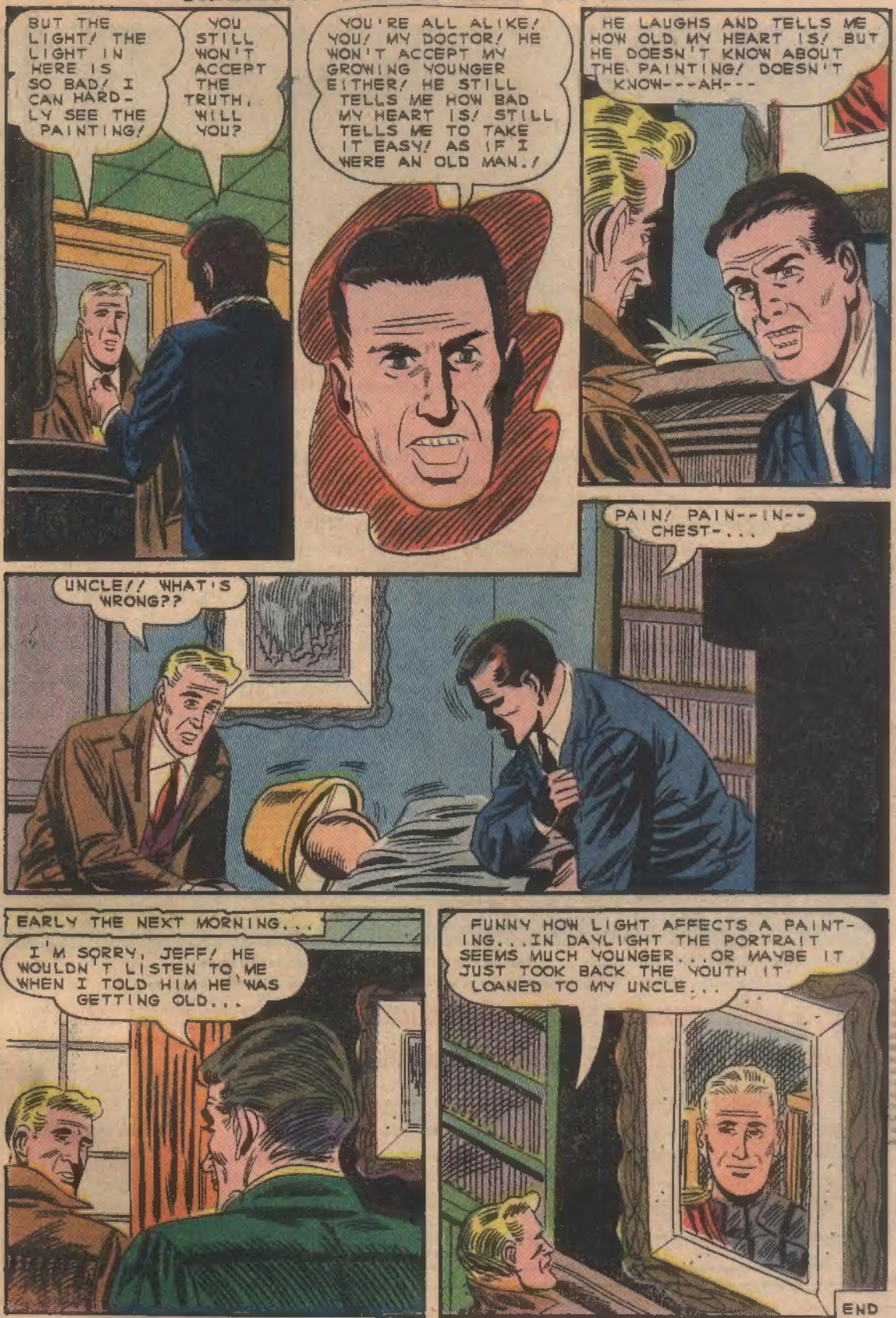
AND SO THEY LAUGHED ..LAUGHED AT A MAN FOR SPENDING SO MUCH MONEY FOR A PAINTING WHOSE CREATOR WAS UNKNOWN... WHOSE VALUE WAS UNDETERMINABLE...BUT NOT EVERYONE LAUGHED! THOSE WHO KNEW AND BELIEVED IN ITS LEGEND WAITED HOPEFULLY FOR THE INEVITABLE RESULTS.






I ASKED YOU TO COME FOR OUR FIRST ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION! IT WAS ONE YEAR AGO TODAY THAT YOU LAUGHED AT ME FOR BUYING THIS! BUT YOU DON'T SEEM TO BE LAUGHING NOW!
IT'S AMAZING!


YES, ISN'T IT? LOOK CLOSELY! SEE HOW THE PAINTING HAS CHANGED! THE TIRED LINES AROUND THE MOUTH! THE WRINKLED SKIN! AND SEE MY FACE!...


BUT THE LIGHT/ THE LIGHT IN HERE IS SO BAD/ I CAN HARDLY SEE THE PAINTING/
YOU STILL WON'T ACCEPT THE TRUTH, WILL YOU?
YOU'RE ALL ALIKE/ YOU/ MY DOCTOR/ HE WON'T ACCEPT MY GROWING YOUNGER EITHER/ HE STILL TELLS ME HOW BAD MY HEART IS/ STILL TELLS ME TO TAKE IT EASY/ AS IF I WERE AN OLD MAN./
HE LAUGHS AND TELLS ME HOW OLD MY HEART IS/ BUT HE DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT THE PAINTING/ DOESN'T KNOW---AH---
PAIN/ PAIN--IN--CHEST-...
UNCLE!/ WHAT'S WRONG??
EARLY THE NEXT MORNING...
I'M SORRY, JEFF/ HE WOULDN'T LISTEN TO ME WHEN I TOLD HIM HE WAS GETTING OLD...
FUNNY HOW LIGHT AFFECTS A PAINTING...IN DAYLIGHT THE PORTRAIT SEEMS MUCH YOUNGER...OR MAYBE IT JUST TOOK BACK THE YOUTH IT LOANED TO MY UNCLE...
END

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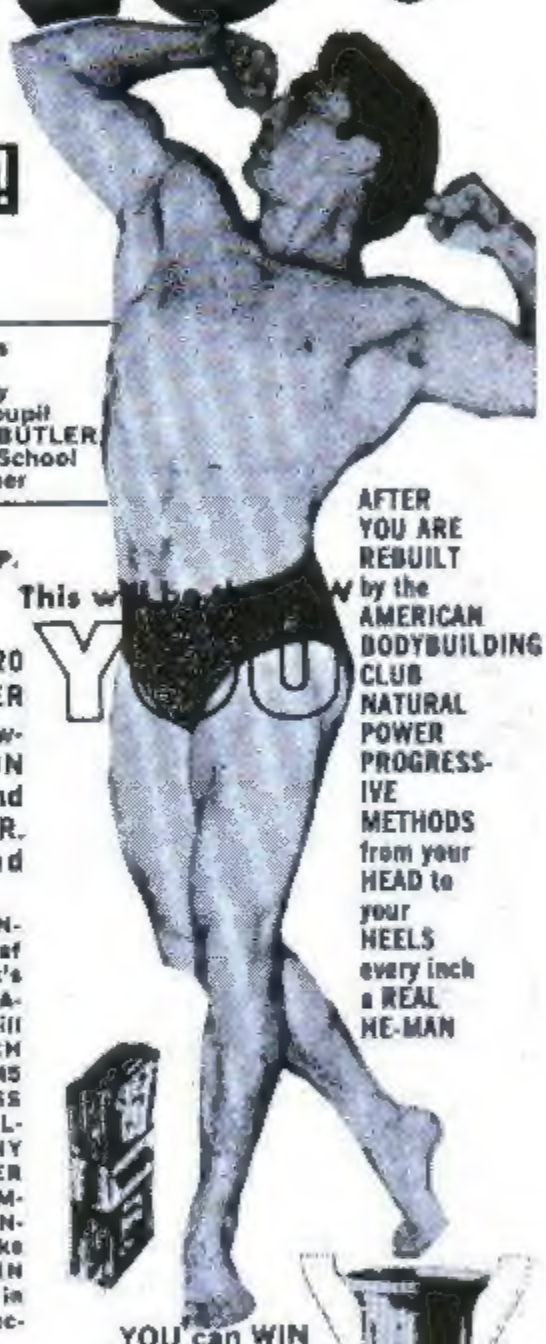

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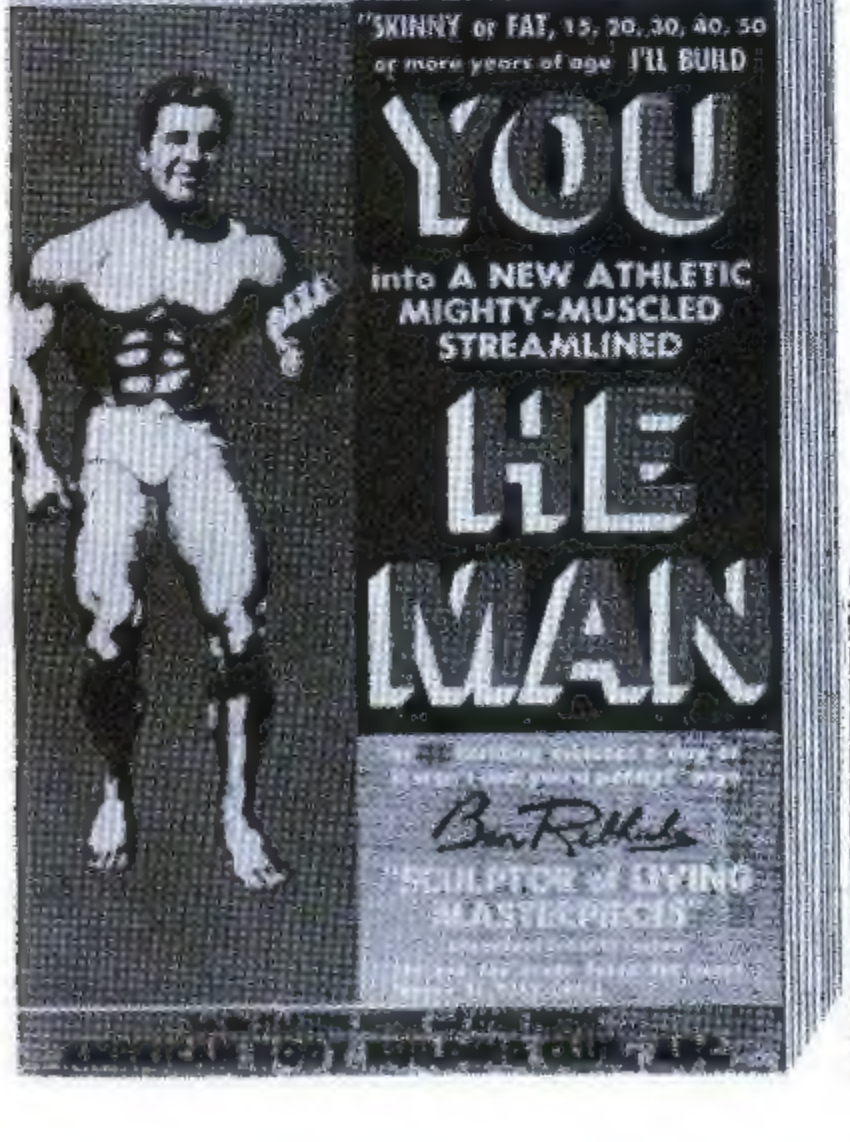
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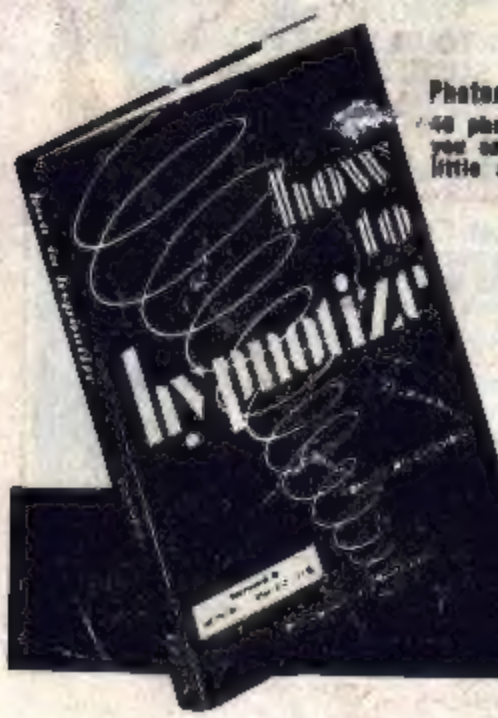

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